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SEEING THINGS

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~~FROM THE TEAM~~

ANDREW OBENREDER | FOUNDER OF MÜVMAG

As soon as we received and read the story from Camila Stefaniu, I was sure it would be the cover story, even before reading through the other submissions and finishing our own pieces.

In a period where women are rising up against the powers that be for an equal place in the world, I believe it is necessary to not only give credit to those who have climbed from adversity but to share those triumphs. It's my hope that they reach and inspire someone fighting through something of their own. So thank you, Camila, for moving forward, and we hope that your struggles will help others to continue doing the same.

Although we aim to cover something from every corner of parkour culture, the pieces contained within these pages somehow were unbelievably cohesive, and without the intention to be so. Regardless of how it occurred, it makes for an exciting read and leaves us with things to consider and continue into the future.

Speaking of the future, ISSÜ #4 is a massive milestone for us as it concludes our first year of the print edition of MÜVMAG.

Here's to many more to come!

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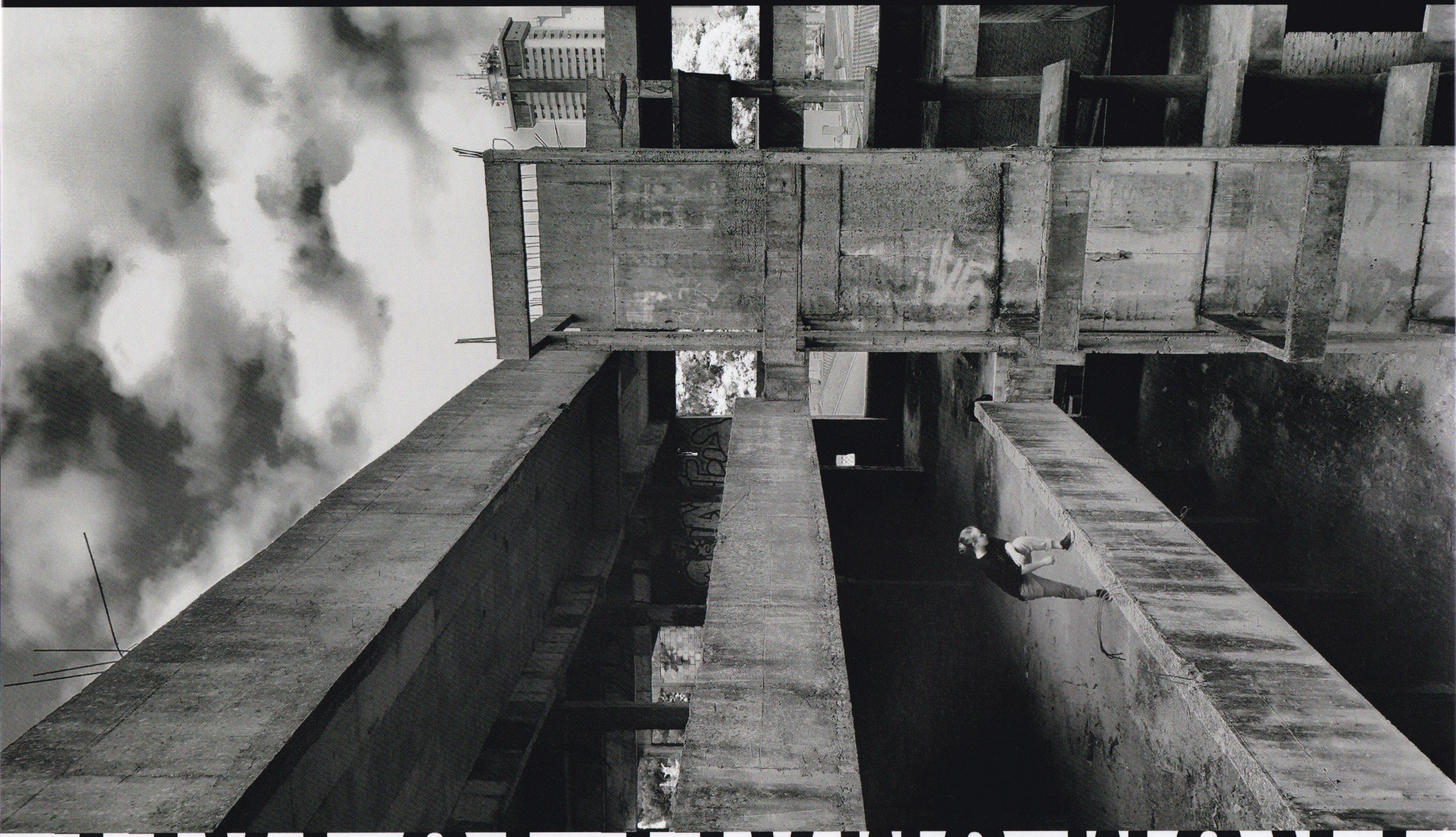

FROM SMALL TO TALL

STORY BY **CAMILA STEFANIU** **@CAMILASTEFANIU**

COVER PHOTO BY **GUILHERME ROCHA DE OLIVEIRA** **@GUILHERMERCHDLVR**

My life as a parkour practitioner started in the last quarter of 2011, in my hometown, where I was born and where I lived until I was fifteen. My introduction to parkour went about when the famed documentary "Jump London" aired on Brazilian open TV, dubbed, for the first time. My older brother and I were exposed to the sport this way, at the same time.

I was a very active kid living in a tiny town. I had bounced back and forth between many different sports, continuing to do so for quite some time before dedicating myself fully to parkour. Beginning by myself was quite rough, even though I viewed the practice itself as I would any other outdoor game at the time.

In this mostly rural hamlet called Cornélio Procópio, where the coffee Baron spared some of his lands to the settlers, my brother and I managed to get a small group of kids together who were eager to try a sport which none had ever heard of. The town itself had no structure, as we know it today, to support practitioners: no gyms, no coaches, and no peers for the kids to look up to or learn from. I was already 5 or 6 years into parkour the first time I ever trained in a parkour gym. It was also the first time I ever had the opportunity to train on rails and bars and try my hand at those unique moves we are so fond of.

Consequently, all of our sources on parkour itself were limited to the internet, with most of the information coming from videos, blogs, and forums. Eventually, when we were finally allowed to access social media by our parents, we were able to network with other practitioners from Brazil. We went on for quite some time before we met someone experienced, who we could learn from. Luckily, we slowly found that the town had quite an abundance of spots, that even as kids who couldn't go anywhere without their parents, could make something of. Throughout the years, we went from training only in the same public square to exploring the city, doing our best to find every little spot we could.

While we introduced ourselves to the outlying parkour community, I went through my first tribulation as a casual practitioner. It seemed that I had stopped growing taller just as all my other classmates were going through their growth spurts. Soon enough, I was already a foot shorter than everyone else. My family took the initiative of asking for recommendations for an endocrinologist doctor, and we ended up with an appointment in the nearest large urban center, about 60 kilometers from my town.

After deciding to trust the doctor fully, I found myself being submitted to all kinds of exams and having my blood taken almost monthly. When the results arrived, we were shocked. Despite having functioned normally through all of my childhood, my body had suddenly stopped production of the growth hormone. We never found out the reason why, but if I were to have a normal life, I would need to commit to a daily treatment for at least the next eight years or so. The therapy itself involved a strict regulation of sleep cycles, diet, exercise, and the worst and most memorable, the application of a daily dose of the hormone I lacked through intramuscular injections.

The treatment took a pretty significant toll on a kid who was barely ten, and I did not deal with it well. Aside from the feeling of utter impotence, the same question repeated in my mind: "Why can't I be like the others"? A long process of regaining self-acceptance began. The lack of people with the same condition as me in my social circles, and the fact that the treatment was not even guaranteed to work made it incredibly difficult. It was more of a "damage control" situation than anything else.

Some more years went by as the treatment gave me a routine that was not too different from most people. By the time I was 13, my height had caught up to my friends. I took injections every day, I needed to sleep religiously at 10 PM, and I couldn't go to sleepovers, as missing the medication would be a huge hassle. Another part of my routine was changing drastically, though. My brother, who had always been a constant companion in parkour, moved away, and the others from our group either quit or became uninterested in parkour. We all became increasingly more distant as the main thing that held us together faded from their daily lives.

That was when I realized that if I wanted to keep dedicating myself to parkour, I needed to learn how to deal with the oppressive ambient towards the sport in the town. As long as we were a bunch of youngsters playing some weird sort of game, nobody could ever be bothered. As I grew up, I found that the people around you start having different expectations for you. About the way you spend your free time, about what sports are you supposed to practice as a girl, about where you should or shouldn't go. From the moment I was alone as a teen practicing parkour, the number of people that were actively criticizing what I was doing piled up. The family would look at me with disapproving eyes and try to convince me to change and "drop my act." At the same time, strangers were often aggressive, throwing insults and provocations at me when passing by. They always told me how stupid I looked, or that what I was doing was the stuff of criminals. It honestly hurt when people would go out of their way to tell me that, as a girl, I wasn't supposed to be doing this stuff. So I turned to the parkour community itself for help, and I found out that most of them thought the same and were just as prejudiced against women. I guess we've all been there in some way.

With pressure from the outside world, and my thoughts draining my motivation, I began focusing even more in my sessions. Everyone made fun of me everywhere I went. From school to anywhere on the streets, I tried to understand myself better through parkour. How could I improve myself so I would feel good about what I was doing? One of the most challenging parts of training by yourself is staying motivated, and at the same time, finding new ways to challenge yourself every session. While learning something new alone, repeated failure can easily make you disillusion yourself with your progress, and training can become off-putting. Still, at the same time, most of us demand standards for ourselves that are too high to meet. We feel we should be trying something different, not the same drills every day, and then your motivation plummets. We must develop a firm and fair sense of self-criticism so that it leads to self-actualization, not self-hate. Before I achieved that, I felt fragile, and at my worst, questioned if I should quit parkour and dedicate myself to something simpler and more accepted.

As my self-esteem slowly improved, I came to terms with the way people from my world viewed me, and I became much more resilient to this kind of destructive criticism. Through my dedication to parkour, I realized how much I was improving and how productive my sessions were. As I began to immerse myself more in the national and international communities, I met people who supported me and made a difference every day, even from so far away. So when 2017 came, I had an opportunity to go on my first international trip, and attend my first parkour competition. The fact that I was taken seriously somewhere else gave me hope. If people took me seriously abroad, why not in Brazil too?

That was the first time I ever considered pursuing a professional career in parkour, and it was life-changing for me. I had never felt that sense of self-accomplishment before, and it helped shape my decision to follow through on the thought. My first competition was not only a big opportunity for me to realize how far had I come, but how far I could take myself with the support from my peers.

That same year, I ended up qualifying for the Air Wipp competition in Sweden, just as I went through some of my hardest times health-wise. Despite feeling down and with apparently no way to even attend the event, I ended up taking the suggestion of trying to crowdfund my trip, which turned out much better than expected. The competition itself was quite the experience and one of my fondest memories from my time with parkour. It was at that time that I got to meet all the people I grew up admiring and learning from through the web, which was a surreal experience. It was nice to get to know them and see how they all dealt with the competition so differently and in a much more wholesome and friendly manner. Even though I barely spoke any English, let alone Swedish, and was very shy overall, I felt welcomed and cared for by the community for once. From that moment on, there was no turning back.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SAMO VIDIC**

Back in Brazil, I decided to talk to my parents. I told them that I wanted to move from my hometown to somewhere where I would be able to be supported appropriately in my development as an athlete. To my surprise, I managed to convince them, and they trusted me in the transition from a town with barely thirty thousand people to a city with millions of inhabitants. It was not easy at all, as I was fifteen and utterly clueless about life in a large urban center. Now that I was on my own, I learned to take care of myself, how to move around the city, and adapt to a culture that was radically different from a town deep in the countryside. The most challenging part was organizing my routine so that I could be everywhere I needed to be (mainly school and training), and still have enough time to maintain the apartment.

Then I had my first encounter with big business, which brought a lot of support and sponsorships. Some didn't entirely turn out, while others did, but it was all part of developing my career as an athlete. All in all, it was the period where I felt I matured the most, and that motivated me to continue fighting for a space in the world for myself.

Now, as a 17-year old professional athlete from Brazil, I never expected to end up inspiring other women that love moving to develop themselves in parkour and keep themselves motivated. For that reason, I have made an effort to stay connected with the community that helped raise me, and always be present in jams, events, talks, and wherever else here in Brazil.

The opportunity that I have to provide representation to girls in our community and being able to give back to the people who supported me, and the sport, are most important to me. I'll keep loving this wonderfully, creative method of self-expression through movement. The challenges before, and what I am currently facing to be in a position to inspire others, is something I can always look back on to feel confident in understanding myself. Never forget your roots.

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INTERVIEW

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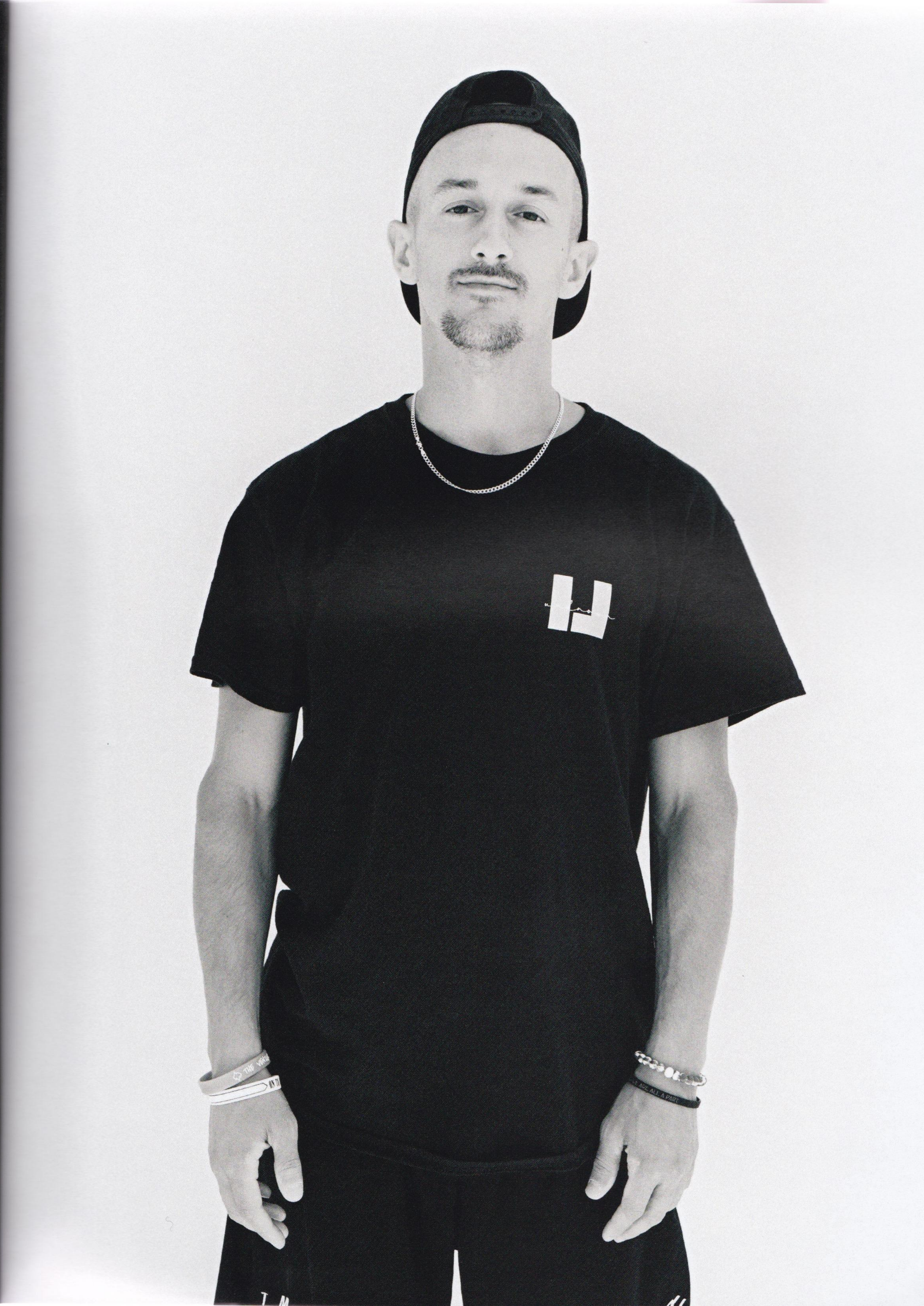

Yo, what's going on, brother?

Yo, yo, what's happening? It has been a while. It's been a really long time actually.

You aren't fucking wrong. How's life going for you?

Life is good right now. I'm at my girlfriend's parents' for Christmas. They're hosting, so there's a lot of people coming over, so I'm helping out decorating cooking a little bit. You know, the typical Christmas vibes.

Oh hell yeah, man.

It's not bad, especially because where I come from, we don't really celebrate Christmas the way most Americans do, so it's really cool to see some sort of dedication to make the house look cool, cook great food for people they love, share all the love that you can. It feels warm. It's a good feeling.

Interesting, so yeah, you're from Albania. Where exactly in Albania?

The capital. I lived there for 21 years, and then after that, I came over here, and then obviously everything had to start from the beginning. Which is kind of a big change, if you think about it. Most people say, "It's okay, he's young," but 21 is not as young as you want it to be, English or any different language kicks in differently. It's not the same as if you were to come in when you were two and go to school.

It's a super intricate process. Like you might have been young, but not so young that you integrate naturally.

Yeah, exactly. I'm 21, I'm pretty much ready to go out and live my life; have an apartment, study, and work, you know, typical adult stuff. I did all my school when I was young back then, so everything has been done in a different language, now I pretty much have to erase all that, and then redo it somehow in my brain with a different, secondary language.

So you said you don't really celebrate Christmas the same in Albania, is it a religious difference?

Oh, no, we do, but here it's a way bigger holiday, everybody starts to decorate their houses in a way bigger fashion than I would say back home. At home, we celebrate Christmas, of course. In a less decorative spirit, I would say. We celebrate New Year's Eve a little more than people here would celebrate New Year's Eve, it's a swap of the holidays.

So, what about parkour background for you? How was parkour in Albania?

It was pretty much nonexistent. I had to come up with everything. When I first started, everybody was obviously learning how to flip, so flips were basically the goal. If you think about it, you had a backflip, you had a front flip, and you had a cork, to learn how to do a cork in 2008 was just, woo, baby, you're a G.

So I was kind of rushing into that to get better and chasing the gyms with mats and foam pits, which there was none of back home. But you know, some of them were gymnastics gyms. So all you do is sneak in there for an hour or two when the teams would not have workouts or sessions, and then send whatever we could. There were days when the lights would go off in the gym, and I swear we would still go out and jump in the darkness, and darkness is hell. We would try to use the lights from the other buildings, and very rarely when it would be a full moon, somehow it would just brighten up a tiny square in the whole gym and everybody would sesh there. When I say everybody, I mean it would be like three people, because that's how many people there were back then. Super basic, I learned a palm flip, maybe backflip, just do it to say we did it. We didn't really care if the lights were off. We went out there, and we tried to learn what we could, especially me, because I really loved it.

Most of the friends that started to do parkour with me, as soon as I left the country, kind of faded away and nobody kept up anymore. I was pretty much the glue back home that keep people together to learn. I think it was only five people that actually trained for a little bit with me and then some of them left parkour and disappeared, at least in the capital. I can't really speak for the other cities, but for the capital, I'm pretty sure I was the only one of the friends that were doing it in the beginning.

It's kind of hard actually because when I go now, I can come up with more stuff because I have a lot of experience, I can commit to bigger jumps, I see the city in different ways. Way more. I look around the city, and I say, "Okay, I can do that jump. Look at this running pre; look at this tictac," all these little things. Whereas back then, I would have never seen any of those. All I would see is "Oh, look at this ledge, I can do a front flip here or a backflip." Mundane stuff back then. As for now, it's like I can't wait to go back so I can just keep exploring and try to do something bigger, something that obviously has never been done or probably wouldn't ever have been done. I don't think anybody back home cares about parkour as much as I did, I think.

The thing that really caught my attention is the fact that you guys literally snuck into a gymnastics gym, and trained in a spot in the gym, that was flooded by moonlight. That, for me, is probably the most interesting gym story I've ever heard.

Yeah, just popped in my head. I was like damn, there were actually nights that we had the lights off. Especially in the winter, when the sun sets at four, and we're supposed to go to the gym at five, how the hell did we do it? A few times, the moon would help us if you really wanted to stay. So we'd go from one corner of the gym to the other one, just doing super basic stuff.

I don't have any pictures or videos of the gymnastics gym, and you probably wouldn't even label it as one. It was this gymnasium type of place with a weird floor in the middle for people that could do passes; roundoff back handspring double full, double backs, stuff like that. The other side was the bars for men. This was the super sketchy location near a window, so if you slip the wrong way, you're probably going outside the building. Trust me, the conditions were hilarious.

You know, we basically learned as much as we could. We milked the gym. We went there every day for a long time, and then my training transitioned heavy when I came here because of the architecture. Actually, in the first and second years, I stuck to freerunning and learned dub corks. Never double backs, double fronts, or any of that, mainly double corks, that was my main goal. The architecture here is so appealing. For parkour, it's perfect. If you took pictures of Josiah, you put them out on the internet, it's like the mecca of parkour on the East Coast. If kids go there, and they know what parkour is, they'll be like, "This location has been built for us."

Let's talk a little bit about that the transition. Not even just the transition from Albania to the states in terms of parkour, just the transition in general. How did that go?

That was fun. It was odd, I lived in the capital city, and I was two minutes away from everything; stores, bars, restaurants, museums, all of that. I was that close to the city. When I moved here, my sister lived in like the suburban area, so I was kind of far from whatever I was used to. In the beginning, it was just days off. I was mostly just staying at home and trying to figure out how to get to the city. It was super quiet because obviously everybody was at work, and I was thinking like, "Where is everybody? Why is this area so quiet? What's wrong? What's happening?" I felt so odd. It's something I had never experienced because back home, I could walk to wherever I wanted to and be fine with a 10 to 15-minute walk. It was the easiest thing ever, whereas when I moved to the US, it was a 25-minute bus ride and then another 25-minute train ride to go somewhere specific, and if you go somewhere else from there, it would probably take longer. So the closest would be an hour away, and the farthest would be at least two, and I've done a bunch of those as well.

It was a strange transition to be honest until I figured out that people work from Monday to Friday, then Saturdays and Sundays are days off, and everyone goes out. Back home, we didn't really have malls up until a couple of years ago, so I didn't even know what a mall represented or how big it was. Malls are huge here, people go there in their free time and get something to eat, have kids play, typical muggle stuff if you really think about it.

Back home, I had no reason to drive anywhere; I could walk. People here need to drive to get to places. If you see Albania on a map, it's crazy tiny. On a map, you can spot the US in less than a second. So that's a big change. If Albania is so small, then the capital is going to be even smaller, so that gives you an idea of how close together everything is. Everything is within walking distance. But if you think about it, also Europe is made like that, and it's smaller than the US. You can walk to places easier than you can when you're here. Or at least that's what I thought because now I can walk to places from where I live. So I guess it depends on where you live really?

Yeah, exactly. Back in Pittsburgh, I lived in the suburbs, and it would take me thirty minutes to walk into the town next to me. There's literally nothing around me at all. If I wanted to walk to the city, it would take me a couple of hours, even though it's a 20-minute drive, it's all up hills. Then I came to Mexico. The city itself is immense, and it's literally meant for walking. I can leave this house, and there are a million things around. I need to go to a store? Cool. There's one next to me. I want to go to the park? There's one directly next to me. It's super convenient.

Yeah, exactly. You definitely get a grasp of what I'm trying to say with being able to walk to places. It's very similar in Europe, even though Mexico is giant compared to anything there.

The city is, yeah. We've got 22 million people in the direct city limits of Mexico City, and then there are 24 million people in the metropolitan area. It's fucking outrageous.

So even back home, the population of the entire country is 3 million, so you see 3 million every day when you walk down the road here, that's how small the country is. The population obviously is a bit smaller. See, Albania is 11,500 square miles. It's super tiny. It's also not small if you really think about it, but it is small. It's literally only a thousand square miles bigger than Massachusetts. But it's a good place nonetheless.

It's definitely on my list to visit.

Oh, yeah, when you go to Italy or Greece, you're right there pretty much.

Going back to the transition from training in Albania to the training in Boston, you said that when you got to Boston, it immediately drew you into a new style of movement.

More or less after a little bit of time.

Do you feel like it was just the environment alone that inspired that sort of movement, or was it the community as well?

I think the first two years were more freerunning based because I didn't know anybody. If I did go into the city, I would go into a touristy area. Nothing major would be there, just trees for wall flips and benches for punch fronts. I was still into the freerunning vibe. Then, I found Josiah Quincy School in Chinatown randomly one day and ended up seeing Dylan Polin and his crew training.

They were hybrids, they mixed parkour and freerunning together. They were doing jumps and flips, as many as they could. So that's where I started noticing, it's not all about flips. You can do flips as well, but there's a broader way of doing parkour, especially in the city. I think it has a lot to do with the person themselves. Like I know people that love freerunning, and you can see that in their character. There are people that love doing both so you can see that in their videos. You can kind of just tell how or what they would like the most. It's like how most trickers love anime. So if you were at dinner, and they keep spitting Naruto sentences, you could guess that they lean more towards tricking.

If you talk to me, or if you've known me for a long time, you know, I'm specific with a lot of things. I'm like, kind of OCD. So after some time, you may see how my style represents my character. Knowing that character is important as you grow into parkour. I think that what I do with parkour right now, like the way I do small intriguing jumps, weird rail stuff, or you know, bounce backs from walls, it suits me and the way I think. It's perfect for me, and people should aim to go like follow their character when it comes to transitioning into parkour, freerunning, tricking, or anything like that. They all fall under the same human movement, but it's cool to let go and be who you are. I wish I did that before because, honestly, I would have been way better than I am now.

I think I would have pursued the weirdness and the technical jumps way before, and that would have been a good thing. But I'm still happy with where I am right now with my parkour training. It is what it is. You know, you're not going back in time. I'm not going to change anything, even if I had the chance. It's who I am right now, so I don't want to change who I am.

Do you think that parkour, freerunning, or whatever style of movement or method that you train is only a representation of your character, or is it possible that you can develop your character through that movement or training?

I think both. You can let yourself be who you are, and I think everything needs its own time. But people also change as they grow and hopefully become wiser. I've learned to forgive, to acknowledge things, to move forward, not to be sad about certain things. So I think everybody changes a little bit when they grow older. And like I said earlier, I wish I knew to let myself or to do what my character kind of likes to do in parkour since the beginning. But obviously, I can't change that.

Do you think that your character from then likes the same things that the character now likes, or is it that you felt something different, and you want to express something different through this character now?

As you grow old, you figure out what you like to do more. As you keep looking at yourself, you'll see that you have **always been** strict on certain things, you jump a certain way, you move a certain way, and you like specific things. **So what** I've been doing for the past year is kind of like a representation of what I've been my whole life. This **young kid** that likes specific things or likes them in a certain order. So I shouldn't erase this part of me but **instead should** explore it and evolve it. You'll obviously try different things as you grow. I would never, for **example**, try to start learning 180 precisions to rails at height unless I let myself accept the fact that I like **specific jumps**, weird jumps, hard stuff that people don't really think about or like landing on. I think it's **something** you have to acknowledge and fully accept.

I also think that something needs to happen in your life, like a big change, for the movement to change you. Like how injuries shape athletes. Out of all of the people I've really known in the parkour community, nobody has really changed.

You mentioned the ideas of changing and growing as people. Is there something within the last couple of years that you feel really changed you?

Age has a big impact. So I've been doing parkour since I was, or I learned parkour when I was 18, and now I'm 30. So I've been doing parkour for quite a long time, and I bet you have been doing it a lot longer than I have for sure. So back then, we used to train like maniacs almost every day, but we also had no experience, so we obviously didn't know that training five days a week is not always the best thing. But you're young, you have no idea how that will reflect in the future, and you may not be lifting or taking care of your body in a more specific way. It's a really crucial thing to do. So they kind of balance both spectrums, and I think that's really important for longevity. I'll strive to be the healthiest that I can for as long as possible. That's the ultimate goal.

I think I've learned to give my body a break, which is very, very hard. I honestly cannot stay in the same chair for longer than two days without doing anything. Otherwise, I'm going to start losing myself. It's a good thing, though. If you train for four days straight, only the first two are typically super productive and healthy. If you train parkour two days in a row, it's pretty manageable. You can push yourself, and you're always at a safe point. But if you trained hard on the first two, you'll be more prone to injury on the third and fourth days. So it's important to let your body and your brain breathe. Give it a break. Let your muscles heal a little bit.

That's very true. I think that's always been difficult for me. When I young, I was diagnosed with ADHD. Everything was so fucking fast. I couldn't sit still, just had to keep moving, and rest for me was nonexistent. It's taken me my entire life to understand how to be still and how to take the time that my body and my mind need to recover.

And if you think about it, resting doesn't necessarily have to be like, "Oh, shit, today's rest day: nothing." It could be light hiking, rock climbing, soccer, baseball, basketball, helping a family member move something, you know, like stuff like that. There are so many things you can do in life. A day off could mean more than just a day off. It could mean working something other than parkour.

Precisely. Just giving your body time to do something that's less intense than what it did previously. It doesn't mean you have to sit still for an entire day, although it's good to be still sometimes. I'm very much into active rest. If I'm inside after training for three days and I'm working, I will stretch the entire time.

Yeah, exactly. If you're going to sit down on the floor, just keep moving. Throw in some handstands, stretch, or do yoga. I think that yoga is the best resting movement. Even though I don't do it as much as I should, I think I think yoga is medicine.

So what do you do, whether it be physical or mental, for both rest and preparation for your movement?

I know my limits. I already know the things that I can't do. The first jump will obviously be my prep, and if I bounce back, we're ready to go for the real one. The majority of my training is solo. I just have the best time training solo. I put music on, and I can just train the entire day without a single issue. I think this goes back to Albania during my first two years. I was the only one doing this, so I kind of got used to being with myself the entire time, and it was the only way to push myself. Nowadays, we have people that can tell us that we can do it or not from our previous test jumps, so it's kind of like a safe bet that we have somebody out there even to help someone if they get injured. But back then, being alone was the normal thing for me.

And I also think that this goes with the character that we spoke of earlier. I don't mind being alone at events, going for a long run, or a long bike ride. I think solo action is a really good thing to do, and I don't think people do it all that often because we crave to be with other people. That's why we even have friends in the first place. That's why we get married. That's why we do all these things in life with more people around us. So we feel loved and appreciated, and it's easier to deal with life.

I do recommend people to train alone because in that way you can also find yourself truly, as it's only you and this jump. Who else is going to help you right now? Who else is going to push you? Everything is happening in your mind, and you are in control of everything. So you have to press that button. Sometimes you're going to succeed. Sometimes you're going to fail, and it's at that failing point that you learn you can do certain things. We have to work out for it. Going back to meet success through that failure. If you know your limits and you don't surpass them because you can't at that specific time, there is always sometime in the future.

What does your training look like to prepare for parkour?

Well, the wintertime is very harsh here on the East Coast, so hitting the gym is obviously a priority. I don't really think of it as lifting heavy for me to succeed at something. Like wanting to compete at NAPC, therefore, I have to work out for a certain goal. I don't have a goal right now. I just want to be as healthy as I can and keep up with parkour for as long as I can because parkour makes me happy. Therefore, I want to do it for as long as I can.

Having HUB has been an important aspect of winter training for us since the winter doesn't really allow us to train outside from November to April. Training outside in February, for example, it's like death.

I don't do yoga, but I do stretch. I've tried yoga it a few times, and I know it's super relaxing. It's not a workout, but at the same time, it is because your body's working heavy to keep you in certain poses, to keep you breathing properly, breathing deeper. I know I'm overdue for yoga sessions, especially now that wintertime is here, it'll be the perfect timing for that.

Is there anything that you dig outside of parkour? What are you into that's not jumping?

Unfortunately, they are summer things, but I like cliff jumping and diving. Back in Albania, there was this Olympic pool with a 10-meter diving board. So I would always jump from there. The max that I've done was a somersault and a half, and that was pretty cool, to be honest. And I really like diving. It's a good feeling to be in the air for a little bit and then submerge yourself in water.

Recently, I've been into mountain biking. I've gotten a good bicycle, and It's a good way to get from home to work and from work to home. If you get into traffic, and the chaos of people, you can cruise right through it. It's a really good feeling, especially if you're listening to good music. Hiking, of course, who doesn't like hiking? It's the best way to lose yourself, lose all the worries in the world, and just be one with nature. Or be with nature for once.

Especially in a time where everybody is so obsessed with technology and phones and being connected to other people and other things. How often do we really take the time to be connected with ourselves?

Don't even bring social media into it because that's a whole different story. That hurts me sometimes because I feel like people are spending too much time on their phones. Even though I can be guilty of it as well, I can stay away from it without an issue. I don't even have to choose to not be on my phone, it's not a choice, it just happens automatically. Just step away from it and do something else. People nowadays have to force themselves, or there are apps that will not let you go to certain apps for a time. That's a little too extreme. You have made yourself so obsessed with social media that you have to lock yourself out of it certain hours of the day or for periods of time because you can't do it normally. Social media is a drug.

It's a big issue as it replaces basic human connection, and it's easy. You can literally pick up a phone, talk to anyone about anything instead of going outside and talking to someone about anything. While technology was designed to make our lives easier, it's taken us away from them. It's the same principle behind the addiction to video games. You have a very simple way to achieve something and feel good about achieving. Now, I'm not saying they're bad altogether. There can be benefits to gaming, there are benefits to technology, but these things also provide a simple way to achieve and to feel something. And then once you feel that thing, your like, "Okay, I'm good. I don't need anything else."

Instant gratification is the worst. It makes you feel like you didn't work hard for what you got. You just got it right away, and you're ready to go to the next step. People don't work hard anymore to have a final product. Instead of working hard for a whole winter to put up a video, you put up one clip on Instagram, and you get that Insta gratification. I think it just ruins the idea of working hard and getting rewarded for it at the end. That's just my opinion. I don't really think about it too much these days to be honest because everybody's on their phones and don't really know anything else. It's a hard one. I swear we can sit on that for hours.

Yeah, we can, but let's not. So you mentioned mountain biking. How long have you been biking? What got you into that?

It was randomly in the news. I saw there was a Red Bull Rampage happening in October, and I was like, "Okay, well, what the hell, this is close. Let's see what it is." I saw some videos from back in the day that looked phenomenal, the bikes looked beautiful, and the people were nuts - sending these crazy gainers. I don't know the specific words for them, but it's kind of like parkour, but a different sport. Everyone's enjoying it in the same way that we do, loving it, taking care of themselves and the bikes in the same way that we take care of ourselves and our shoes. And honestly, just the beauty of the bikes. The bikes looked gorgeous - the full suspension ones - Jesus Christ. They are like six, seven thousand bucks, which is absurd already because you can buy a motorcycle or a car for that. But I was interested and I never really had a bike in my life. I had a bike when I was a kid, but in my adult stages, I never really had a bike or had a chance to bike from home to work.

So it was time to get a bike and to see how I was on it. Not bad, but compared to those people in the videos, I'm absolutely nonexistent - a ghost, but it feels great to be able to do a little bunny hop on the sidewalk. It makes you feel like, holy shit, I just did a gainer right now. That's how good it feels. Honestly, if you think about it, a workout and a way to wake up. Instead of grabbing a cup of coffee, you drink a cup of water, get up, bike to work, and that gets your body woken up in such a smooth and natural way. It's perfect. And if you catch the sunrise at the same time, then it's complete, I think the morning routine has been achieved. It's super simple, but I think the simple shit in life is the most important stuff that we really need.

You're absolutely right, and I think it's something that a lot of people take for granted. You mentioned something that I think is really important. You compare yourself to these other people, who you feel are in a different league, but does that really matter? You feel something doing that little bunny hop on the sidewalk just as they feel doing gainers, and I think that is the only thing that matters. As long as you allow yourself to feel. Half the time we don't allow ourselves to do things, we don't allow ourselves to feel the beauty of a morning sunrise, and instead, we make excuses. But when was the last time you gave yourself that chance to experience and feel something like that? Imagine you're an old man, and you look back on life. How many times did I see the sunrise? How many times did I allow myself that feeling of freedom that comes when I ride my bike? At the end of the day, it doesn't matter what anyone else is doing. People are doing beautiful things, and we can appreciate and be inspired by them, but what did you do? What did you allow yourself to feel?

Yeah, I don't think people allow themselves to feel anymore. For example, for somebody to go to work from home, from home to work by biking, that'll take longer. They would rather just drive and get there faster. They already went to work; therefore, they achieved that gratification of getting to work because that's the goal, without being tired. That's why you drive, that's why you take short cuts. I don't have to bike, I don't have to use energy, but that's where you find meaning in life, by taking a different route to work or sometimes doing something different than somebody else. Sometimes just waking up super early and then biking elsewhere and then biking to work. It's the little things that we forget to do, or we just don't do anymore.

That's very true. And not to jump away from that, but I have this question in my head. I'm always curious to know what people think about the progress of parkour. Where do you see parkour in say, 10 years from now?

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Honestly, I've never thought about it like that because whenever I look at or do parkour, I always think of it as something that we are always going to be able to do without expecting anything from other people. When there are championships and Red Bull Art of Motion type of stuff, I don't really care because I never saw parkour as something that needed to be quantified or qualified, something that needed a second or third place. For me, it's about what challenges we can overcome and how. What can we create as a community? The idea of parkour is a meditation for me, something present. So I can never perceive the future of parkour. I'd hope to see more jams and people together. Or if there are competitions, for example, no matter whoever wins, the prize would go to charity. So what you're doing is not going to your self-interest, but it's to help somebody else or serve some other purpose. That means that even though you won that speed course, you did it for something greater than yourself. You didn't win for you to be the fastest guy there, you won it because you wanted to help somebody else on the next stage.

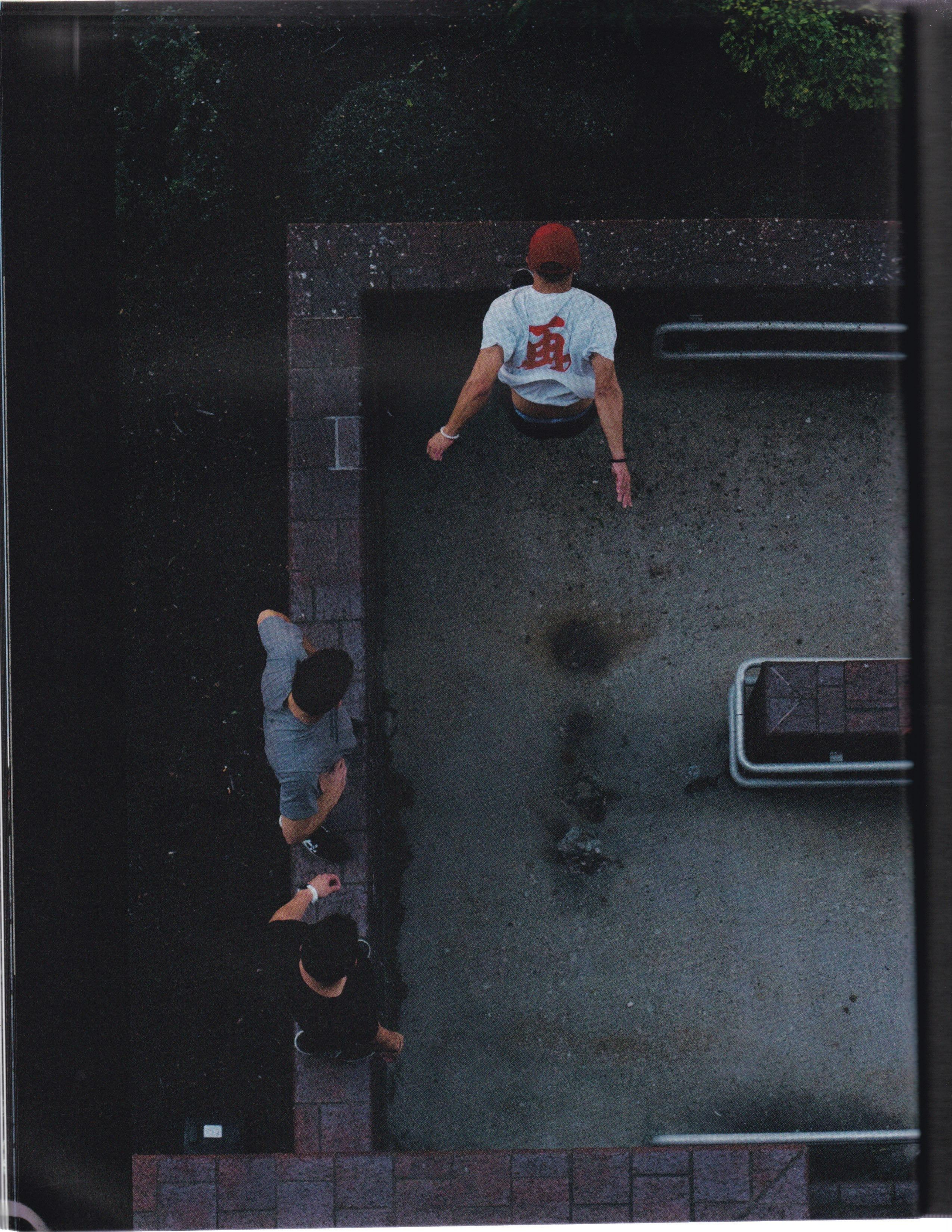
I hope that there are still people out there that will do parkour for the sake of doing parkour - getting a group of friends out in the city to have a good time, go out for lunch, and the typical stuff that we always did after we had a session with the boys. But I have the feeling that it's going to grow. Right now, it's in a good stage, but the more money that we get into it, that will slowly ruin certain things. I hope, that at the same time, it could help people because you know, if somebody won a competition five times and their goal was actually to open a parkour gym, then that is a great cause because it's helping somebody else. I hope to see parkour be something more than us. I think sometimes people forget about that, and they honestly just go out there because they just want to film themselves, and don't care about having a great time with friends. If you go out there only to film because you want people to know and like how good you are, that's just fake to me.

I one-hundred-percent agree. I think an interesting thing that you mentioned was this idea of taking sport parkour and turning it into something that's beneficial for society in general, which is a really interesting concept. It would be beautiful to see someone run an event like this, or even more so if we could transition things to be like that as a whole because I feel like that's conducive to the roots of parkour. Through different eras, people are always going to see parkour differently. One of the pieces I just wrote for this issue is called The Together School, and it looks at a friend on Facebook who was talking about how he doesn't know how to connect with parkour anymore. The Golden Era for him has passed. He doesn't really feel like he fits into the community, and everyone sees things differently. And to me, it makes perfect sense - they didn't exist at the same time as you, you know, things are always going to be different. Change is a constant, but what are you doing to instill the values that you believe are important?

There are some things that I'm personally afraid of in terms of what the future holds for parkour. A big part of that fear is the duality of our discipline and our sport and how they each affect what we transmit into the future. We are beginning to see a gradual distinction between the two. While sport parkour doesn't hold all of the elements of the original discipline, people are still very community-oriented, and there are still a lot of people that train between the sport and discipline. As individuals, they still have the ideas of being strong to be useful or being to last, and I think we mustn't lose the things that make parkour what it is.

I understand that there are pros and cons to competition, but I think I have always leaned towards being non-competitive in nature. I've never really had the desire to prove myself to anybody aside from myself. I've never felt the honest need to say that I'm better than you because I don't believe it. I don't believe any of us are better, just different. I'm in the pursuit of movement mastery, but for nobody but myself, and therefore, I don't have the desire to showcase it. But I see that there are benefits to competition. There are benefits to saying, "Hey, can you push yourself in a space that may be more challenging because people are watching or because someone else has decided the rules for you?"

As we get further into the future, how will what FIG is doing now affect us? I can already see a difference in sport parkour within our community, what happens when gymnastics continues on that path? I'm afraid of losing that which has the potential to change so many lives, as it did ours. That we become so focused on the physical aspect of it that we lose the real messages and the things that you can take and apply to life. The things that make you a better person or lead you to new and interesting experiences. And I'm not saying that one way is right and one way is wrong. I think that's all subjective, but I do think we are headed in the direction of there being a lot more sport in parkour as well as there being a lot more outside influence, whether it's gymnastics or big companies like Red Bull. I do think there's going to be more money involved, and I think money changes things for certain people. Maybe not everyone, but it changes things.



I'm afraid that an external entity becomes our public face - that they can say, "Here's what parkour is." That feels like the direction that we're headed in, but that's not the direction that I want. And at the end of the day, it's not about what I want. Still, I do think we each have the personal responsibility to take what we have learned from parkour, soccer, yoga, relationships, or love, and put it back into the world so that people can decide whether it's something that they want or not.

So what do you believe we can do so that the things that are important to you, whether it's the community, learning to be alone, or any of the things you've taken from parkour - what can we do to make sure that those things continue to exist in the future?

It's different as time goes by, and as I progressively get older, I won't be able to do it the proper way or to my full potential because obviously, I'm old, you know, I can't do shit. We can only do so much, but I think there are different types of people everywhere in the world. And so everybody has different goals. Some of them just want to show the world that they are the best. Some just want to be on the outside doing what they love. Other people have been pressured to compete because their friends tell them that they have potential and that they can be somebody in this field. Everyone has different intentions. Like Daniel Ilabaca could have won who knows how many competitions back then. And God knows how many people told him to compete. But did he ever? I don't remember him competing in anything.

He was on MTV's Ultimate Parkour Challenge, but he even said he wasn't there to compete but to inspire. And even then, he walked away from it.

So he understood right away. Since that moment of MTV, Ryan Doyle, Livewire, Arroyo - they knew there was something right away. So they took the chance to make some money and then just dipped. And Danny figured that out automatically. Those people come once in a lifetime, and that's a hard person to be. So like I said, it depends on people really. We just can never forget how parkour started, our foundations, the unity, and the fun we have doing it.

How do you think we could create places for that fun and community to exist?

I think parks are important. There are none in Boston, while in New York, there is a crazy amount of them. Not necessarily parkour parks, just public spaces. You can always find people in a park doing calisthenics together just for the sake of doing it, regardless of their age, gender, or all that other bullshit - that shit don't matter. They will always do it just because it's good to be able to train with people, push yourself, and have fun at the same time.

Let's say that you randomly happen to be there, and you run into someone who has won Red Bull Art Of Motion a few times - they will still be training there with you the same way as they would before they were "somebody," or at least that's what my thought would be. I would hope for them to train the same way without being egoistical. I just don't think those things really matter in parkour.

If someone is really famous on Instagram, and they have a particular following, then they might be acting cocky. If we were together, and they thought of themselves as better - that's when we lose the value of what parkour is. And while I hope that will never happen, I am afraid that is already the course we are on. So to prevent that is kind of hard. It goes against all human instincts because we always try and be the best even though we forget how everything started and who we started with.

So we have to go back to basics, I think. What do you think?

I've been there before. I had an experience with a family member who became insanely famous, and I saw what that did to them. Then I had a smaller yet similar experience through parkour. In short, because of short-lived community fame and the money that came from working as a full-time professional in that era, I lost myself. There was a strange duality between Andrew, who felt himself to be this humble, respectful individual that connected with everyone, and Andrew on stage who thought that he stood taller than those around him.

But also you were young, right?

Exactly, but if that ever happened again, then I'd know what to expect. I know what I feel now and what I want out of life. Not that I think I'll ever be in that position again.

Hey, you might end up doing some shit and then be like, "Oh fuck! How did I end up getting here?"

You never know, do you? I think it's important that we to come to those conclusions and understand that the world isn't about me. I'm not the only person who exists here.

Oh, if only all people thought like that, the world would be a beautiful place.

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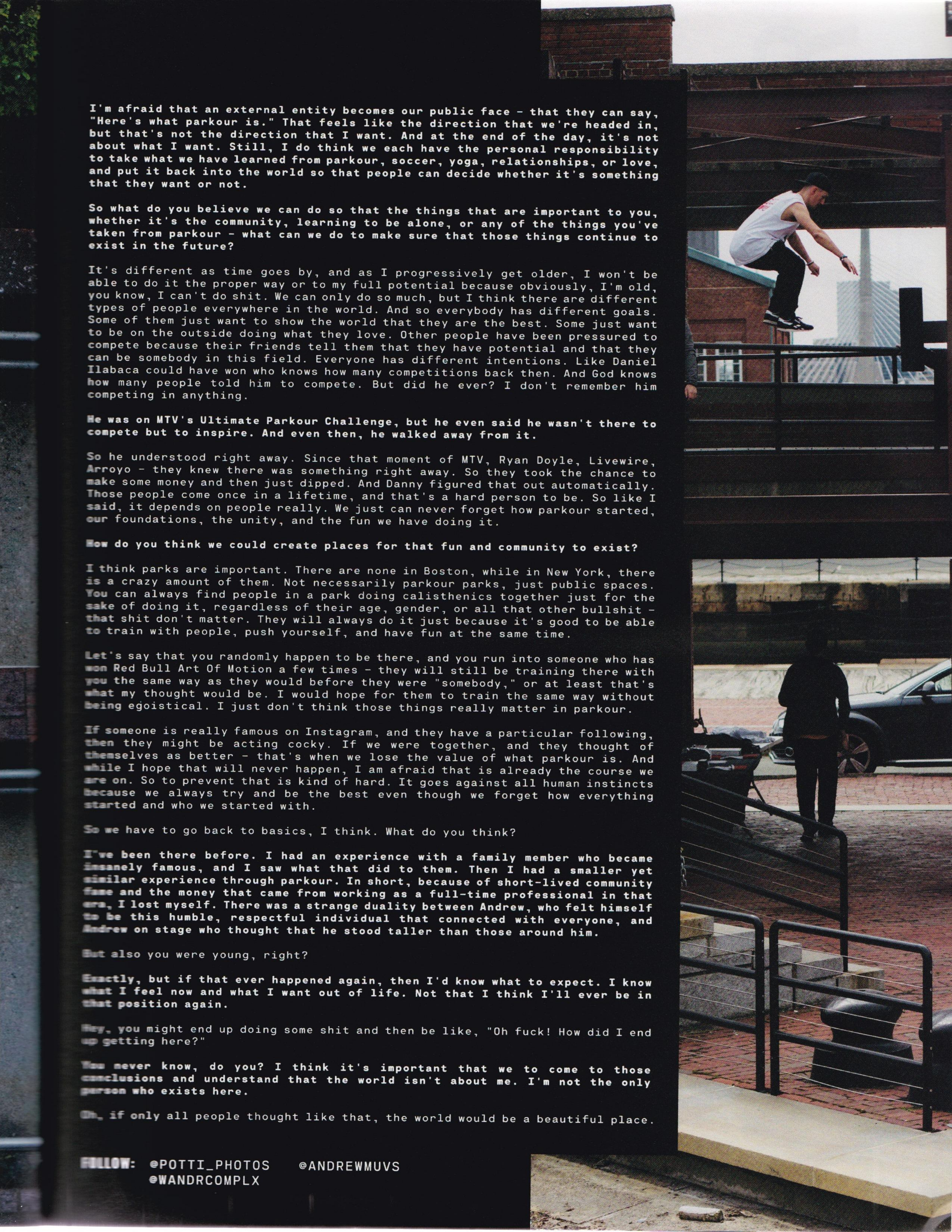

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ERIK REYNOLDS** **@ASECONDICECUBE**

OVER THE PAST YEAR

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THE RISE OF ZINES

Once is Never

A Parkour Zine

Issue 2

STORY BY ARDELL GOLDBERG

STORY BY ANDREW OBENREDER

The zine started with sci-fi, took over the punk scene, and today, with zine culture being more diverse than ever, they've finally descended to the parkour playground.

Once Is Never is one of those zines. It's produced by a few individuals from the Pacific Northwest of the United States, including Cody Stetzel, Filip Tuhy, Sheep, and Bryan Riggins, among a handful of other contributors. Like most zines, they're offering a place for the unheard voice to have a chance, and for diverse ideas to exist.

In a time where the collective parkour voice is dominated by those with the largest social followings and video views, the honest collective and individual voices need a place to be seen and heard. While we all have and can express our ideas through social platforms, blogs, and videos, and we must continue to do so, zines provide something different. Something tangible and accessible.

"It's low budget, easy, and DIY. This means that there is less of a barrier to entry, which encourages more people to participate and more ideas that aren't 100% polished," according to Once Is Never editor, Filip Tuhy. "The price point makes it more accessible for people to buy, which helps with sharing ideas and connecting people through art and writing," he said.

Accessibility of information is how parkour was able to spread around the world so quickly with and is a necessary component in collective growth. While the podcast movement is booming within parkour culture, the rise of zines has just begun.

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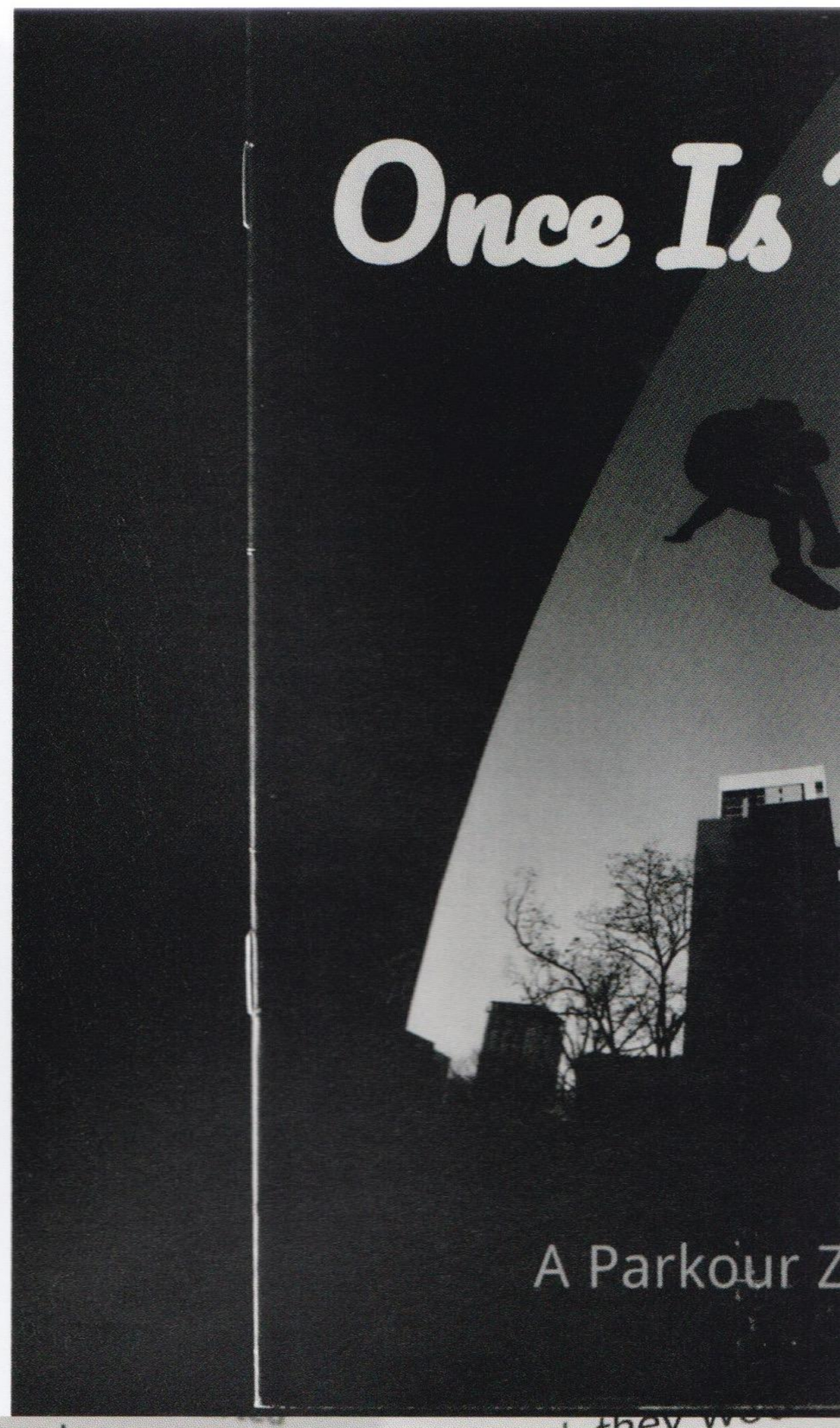
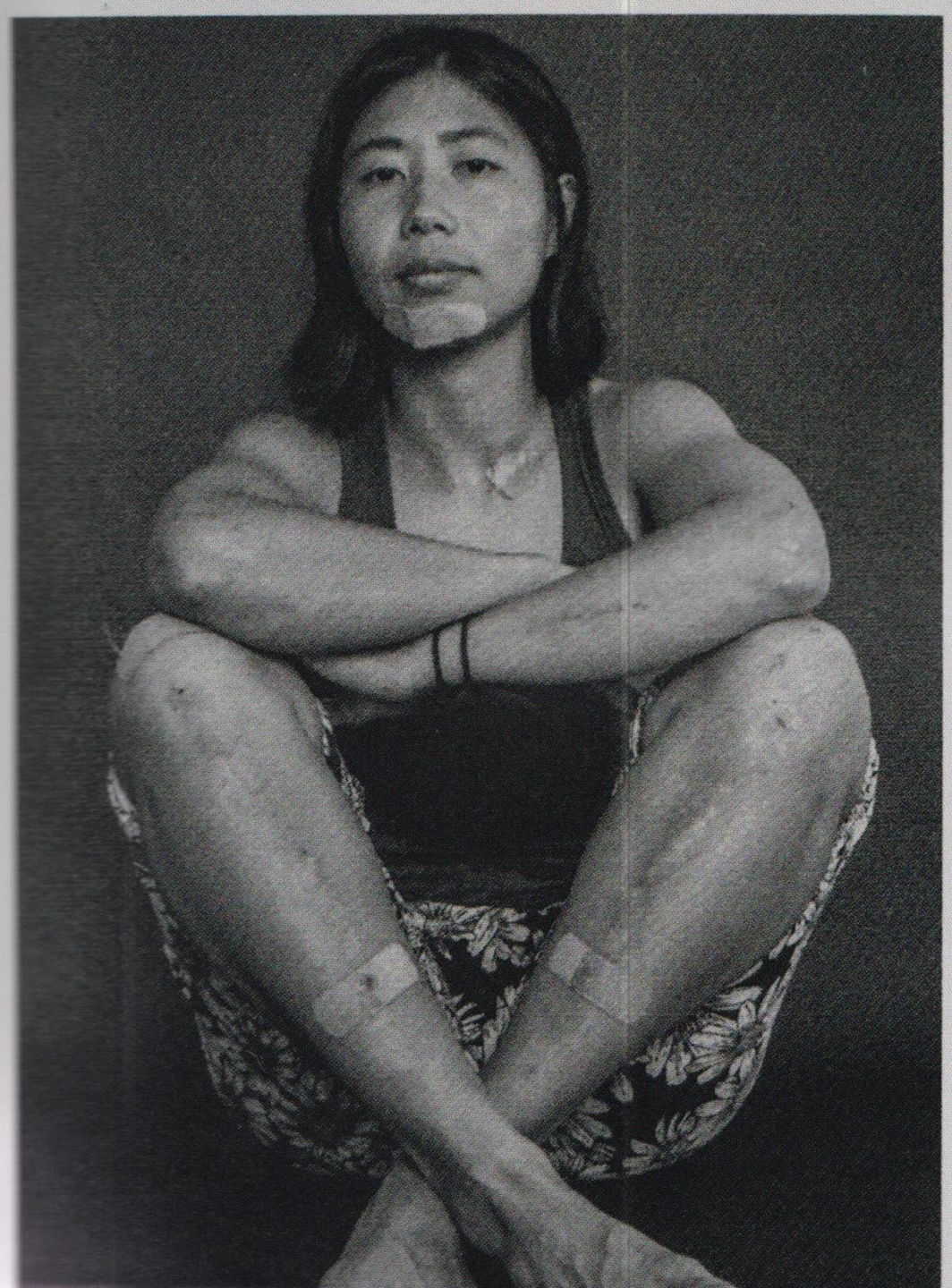


parkour too. First couple of months, I managed to shin or knee a dozen times. I spent a fair amount of time bandaging up long gashes spanning most of the length of my shin, and not being able to bend my knee more than a few degrees.



I've had similar injuries before, so I wasn't concerned, but the frequency started to worry me. Soon, I started seeing scars not as badges of courage, but as signs of sloppy technique and bad judgement. I got upset with myself every time I got a new scrape when in the past, I would just walk it off and carry on. When non-parkour people tell me my scars are badass, I would cringe and tell them that I'm just clumsy. Mistakes are mistakes and I guess I just made them more than everyone else.

Fast forward a year. I was doing a lot more parkour and getting better. I would

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LORDS OF THE TEK

STORY BY ANDREW OBENREDER

The human body is a phenomenally resilient machine, one capable of seriously taking a beating. Fortunately for parkour practitioners, the era of good technique is upon us, and proper mechanics are finally becoming the holy grail they deserve to be. So many free educational resources exist in this age, both for parkour and biomechanics, that there are very few reasons not to have proper technique. However, good technique only goes as far as the body is capable of handling whatever force with which it is met.

Our bones are unbelievably strong, and ounce for ounce, they're technically stronger than steel. In principle, our bones are capable of withstanding loads of approximately 19,000 lbs (8,626 kg), but in reality, it comes down to circumstance. Muscles, ligaments, and tendons, as you can probably guess, withstand far less.

While our bodies are certainly designed to move, the stress we put on our ourselves through consistent training on urban surfaces is most likely far more than we have evolved to withstand. Our ancient Paleolithic hunter-gatherer ancestors were highly active outdoor generalists who used a variety of techniques for survival, however, there are a few main differences between us. Our hominin ancestors combined lots of walking, regular lifting, and short bursts of high-intensity activity, whereas in a typical training session, we are subjecting our bodies to hours of high-intensity activity at a given time. They also weren't jumping at hard concrete surfaces.

If you've been around long enough, you've most likely seen the Fight Science episode with Daniel Ilabaca and Ryan Doyle in which they test the impact force from height on the human body. In short, the conclusions found that a jump or front flip from 9 feet to a 2-inch mat measured between 2,400-3,000 lbs of pressure before a roll was initiated. Replace that mat with concrete, and those numbers rise.

Other studies have shown that walking across level ground alone generates forces on your knees equivalent to 1.5 times your body weight, and jogging generates forces of 3.6 times your body weight. Not only does the external force affect our musculoskeletal systems, but any abrupt landing sends energy traveling directly from our feet, through the body, and to the brain. So what does this mean for the massive, beautifully stuck precision jump or that ridiculous height drop to front flip out? To keep things simple, having perfect technique does not mean that you aren't doing damage to your body.

One main issue I see, and you'll hear it from new and experienced practitioners alike, is that (insert name) has great technique, so the jump was fine. This way of thinking is both detrimental to our own bodies if we practice that ideology, and to parkour's philosophy of "to be and to last." Not only that, but we're projecting dangerous beliefs onto others who may not be as knowledgeable in anatomy and biomechanics.

Another point to consider is physical preparation. Is your body conditioned for the movements that you're doing and pursuing? While the amount of force that the body can handle is most likely a similar amount between people, the strength and mobility of an individual play a role. Someone who lifts heavy is going to be capable of handling larger loads because it's something to which their mechanical systems have adapted. Good mobility also helps to avoid injury in compromised positions.

Heavy or repetitive impact also creates a concern for future injuries to present themselves. There have been a handful of cases in parkour where someone is running, they take off or land from a low-impact movement, only for something to break or tear. Often, this could have been caused by repetitive impact stressors to a specific region without giving it time to heal, and the person may never have known there was an issue.

HHave you ever watched a gray langur move? You'll notice how they almost always transition from large jumps with quadrupedal movements or another jump. Occasionally, you'll see them stick large jumps, but upon impact, you can see how they're built to handle those loads and have the mechanics to match. By watching them move, you can see that they understand how their bodies function from an early age and what mechanical processes are functional for their survival. They're also built to jump and land far distances, and are light for that reason, whereas we have evolved to exist somewhere in between. Since most of us are utilizing our movement skills leisurely, we're re-learning now what works and what doesn't. In the meantime, for the sake of longevity, roll, or do what the monkeys do.

At the end of the day, we are an interesting collective specimen, and our movement is a test of our physical human limits. Our design may just hold up through the process, or it may not. We're designed to move, but is the thing we're pursuing too much? By no means am I saying we need to hault our collective or personal progress, but I do think it's worth taking the necessary precautions if you're looking toward a lifelong pursuit of movement, or give a shit about walking well in your later years. We have some time before we'll see the results of this experiment, but it will be interesting to see who is still running and who is not in the end.

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GRAPHY BY JULIUS KLEIN @JULIUSSKKLEIN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PESHAWA IRANPANAH** **@PESHAWA_PK**

ALMOST EVERY FASHION BRAND HAS SOMETHING THAT YOU'LL DISLIKE. IT MIGHT BE THAT THEY TRIED SOMETHING NEW AND YOU WEREN'T FEELING IT, THE COLOR CHOICE WASN'T YOUR THING, OR MAYBE THE DESIGN WAS WHACK. IT'S A DIFFICULT THING TO SEE COME FROM **NORML BRAND**. THEY'RE JUST ONE OF THOSE COMPANIES WHO BUILT THEIR FOUNDATION AROUND WELL-DESIGNED, MINIMAL BRANDING, AND BECAUSE OF THAT, IT'S HARD TO GO WRONG. AND THEIR NEW COACH JACKET IS NO EXCEPTION. IT'S SLEEK, MINIMAL, AND BLACK GOES WITH EVERYTHING.

NORMLBRAND.CO.UK

PARKOUR IN MEXICO

STORY BY **ANDREW OBENREDER**

AS THE MISAPPROPRIATION OF PARKOUR BY FIG CONTINUES, WE WILL BEGIN TO SEE MORE INTEGRATED SPACES AND DISCIPLINES.

With the continued misappropriation of parkour by the FIG, it is apparent that there will be a rise of integrated "parkour" spaces and programs within gymnastics facilities, just as it has at the gymnastics center at Deportivo José María Morelos y Pavon.

Carlos Morales is the former gymnastics director of the gymnastics center at Deportivo Plan Sexenal, also known as Popotla, in Mexico City, and a long-time supporter of parkour locally. Unlike many gymnastics facilities around the world who barred parkour from their spaces, Popotla was a welcoming home to local practitioners, providing them a space to hone their acrobatic skills. After his work in Popotla, he opened the gymnastics facility at Deportivo José María Morelos y Pavon, which is also home to a new parkour area. With the continued misappropriation of parkour International Gymnastics Federations and their inclusion of parkour as a gymnastics discipline, Carlos had the green light to incorporate a parkour space into his facility, which he built alongside community input with reclaimed wood and scaffolding.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ANDREW OBENREDER** + **JULIEN BLANC**

DEPORTIVO JOSÉ MARÍA MORELOS Y PAVON

MEXICO CITY

The misappropriation of parkour by gymnastics is not at all a new occurrence. For years, independent facilities from around the world have built parkour programs and dedicated spaces as a supplementary source of income, both with the guidance of parkour professionals and without. British Gymnastics and their 'FreeG' was the first mainstream misappropriation of parkour by gymnastics and an attempt to not only re-brand parkour but claim it as their own. As stated by the British Gymnastics website, "FreeG fuses traditional gymnastic and acrobatic tricks, with kicks and leaps made famous through martial arts and brought to worldwide attention by festival performers and stunt actors." While their website does not mention parkour, the accompanying imagery and videos include that of movements used within parkour training, and their curriculum is heavily based on parkour and tricking. With the recent inclusion of parkour as a gymnastics discipline, the probability of this trend growing is higher than before.

The space at Deportivo José María Morelos y Pavon is different from those supporting FreeG or some potentially watered-down FIG variant of parkour. It seems that Carlos understands that parkour is an autonomous discipline, sport, and culture and respects that, allowing people from the community to use the space for cheap or free. The space itself includes an interesting bar setup, which wobbled a bit, some pillars, poorly constructed boxes, a slanted wall, and a floor covered with thick, blue crash mats. "I think the space is conducive for parkour, but it could be much better," Fabian says, "It's not sketch (the gym), but the guy who made the spot told me that the material he could use was from a warehouse, so it's all recycled." While recycling is an act that needs to be supported, the space's construction did need work and was not nearly the quality needed to ensure safety, especially for beginners.

While there is hope for Carlos Morales and his space, the situation with FIG leaves much space for possibility. However, one thing is for sure: gymnastics needs more people like Carlos, and parkour needs less external forces furthering our dilution. Although parkour allows us to explore our possibilities, are the possibilities associated with FIG's involvement a risk that we are willing to take?

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PHOTOGRAPHY – **FILIP TUHY** **@FILIPTUHYPHOT**
FEATURED – **BRYAN RIGGINS** **@DEPLACEMENT**

IN A BOX WITH A MATCH

STORY BY CORBEN WHITE

LIMITING YOURSELF TO BE MORE CREATIVE.

I have a personal project of mine called the Creative Series that I am currently working on. The idea is that every episode features my creativity through the people around me that share a similar mindset. The people featured are either peers or mentors to my creativity.

Spencer Hovel was a peer that I had met and immediately knew we shared a specific mindset within the spectrum of creativity. His style of movement was all based on setting limitations for himself and figuring out how slight alterations affected the final product. His movement, in particular, was all based on altering axis, and by doing simple changes to the axis, he developed a style and understanding of movement very unique to him.

We talked and decided we wanted to film an episode together but didn't really know how to start because, as we brainstormed ideas, we realized expressing simplicity and creative restriction was a difficult concept to capture. In the end, we decided that the best way to capture it was to go on a road trip, film together and use what we get from that. While we were filming, however, I had the idea of restricting myself and my creativity to one lens for the whole two weeks he was visiting. The lens I chose was my Sigma ART 18-35 1.8. This lens, in particular, is an APS-C lens, and when mounted on my full-frame pulled all the way out to 18mm gives the image a really fresh retro look with a black frame around the picture but still retains the high-quality image of the modern camera. By using the lens only at 1.8, it meant I was forcing myself to really focus on composition, camera movement, and color. I would really have to be in all the action the whole time to get the shots I needed.

This was something that really excited me. I typically get the shots I do because of the variety of lenses I use, so I was going to have to force myself to get creative. A lot more thought was needed for the composition, and camera movement, both of which can become really unique and creative with a wide-angle lens.

Spencer flew from Massachusetts to Las Vegas, where I picked him up, and we immediately drove to Temecula, California. We stayed with Josh Mellon and Trevor Kunkel, as well as Leo Rosenbair, Gabe Le Neveu, Zack Karro, and Ethan Klickstein, who were also visiting them. All of the people there, in my opinion, are the next generation of top-level athletes in the sport. They are all on another level athletically, but also creatively, and are pushing what is possible.

It was a really great time getting the opportunity to train at their local gym, Freedom In Motion, and getting to see their day to day training life at the local spots that I have seen in countless videos. Every day was filled with training, whether it was on trips to the grocery store, random parks, or infamous training spots, everyone always had training on their mind. What was especially unique was that all the athletes there had very different training styles from one another. It was an excellent contrast from a lot of communities I have trained with who often form their own subgroups based on movement style. It was fascinating and refreshing to see. Despite the difference in movement styles, we all felt accepted and pushed by one another.

After California, Spencer and I headed to Saint George, Utah, where we would meet up with Justin and Jeremy Carpenter. Jeremy, being one of the pioneers in the sport, had a lot of knowledge and experience to share. His younger brother, Justin, is a fantastic photographer, and someone I look up to, also had many years of experience within the sport and community. We spent some time at Jeremy's gym, Stoic Parkour Academy, which in my opinion, is one of the best gyms I've ever been to. The community there when Stoic first opened was nonexistent. Still, Jeremy had designed the gym so that no matter your movement level or style, you would have the equipment needed to learn and train anything. Slowly after being open for two years, a small community of all sorts of movement had emerged.

After 2 days in Saint George, we were eager to spend some time on an infamous Carpenter brothers adventure. We decided on all going to Great Basin National Park in Nevada, where we spent time enjoying nature and discussing parkour culture and the changes in the sport over time. It was really cool to see that despite the generation gap, we were all able to enjoy time together and connect through parkour.

After our time in Great Basin, Spencer and I made the drive directly across Utah to Grand Junction, Colorado, where we met up with Logan Frady, Justin Jolley, and Vinnie Coryell. We also had the opportunity to train at Move to Inspire, the local gym founded by Vinnie Coryell. We made an effort to spend some time training with Logan Frady, an exceptional up and coming young athlete and Justin Jolley, a fantastic photographer that really has a grasp on what he does. It was a really cool contrast to be with these two, seeing how the new generation of the sport has changed since Jeremy and Vinnie's.

Despite the generation gap, a common theme for everyone was the training culture. Everyone in parkour and the community works so hard to get where they are as individuals, but being apart of a strong community has pushed them all to the next level together.

We then made our way up towards the Denver-Boulder area, doing some backpacking and exploring around the Rocky Mountains along the way. Colorado is absolutely beautiful and is filled with lots of natural outdoor training to occupy ourselves on the way. Once we got to Boulder, I texted one of my favorite people, Micheal Sliger, asking if he wanted to train. When we met up with Michael, so many other athletes came out to train, including Tara, Seth Wang, Elijah Muller, Aidan Lieb, Kristine Dietrich, Max Henry, Bradley Jotte, and Logan Frady.

It was an incredible day of training and was so cool to be with so many like-minded people. The community there is unlike any other that we saw so far on the trip. Everyone had their own style but was definitely a lot more tech-focused compared to California, where the flips are trained a lot heavier.

We then headed off to Denver for some training at APEX with Jared Nahulu, Santos Terones, and Bradley Jotte. APEX has an interesting and vibrant community where top-level athletes train in the same place as newer, entry-level athletes, and they have the opportunity to learn from and be exposed to the community.

After the gym, we headed to town to meet up with Sean Higgins, and Chad Moser. As we moved from spot to spot, Spencer and I were working on filming for his Creative Series, Sean Higgins and I were shooting for his Red Bull Art of Motion submission video, and I was also working with Jared brainstorming and filming a project. Even while I was juggling these projects, I was still using my 18-35mm lens while restricting myself to 18mm. I really enjoyed the limitations that I had put on myself. It allowed me to see the work I was doing differently. While working with these top-level athletes, I focused on the camera movement and how my movement would best feature theirs. The process really helped all of us get creative and achieve the best shots possible.

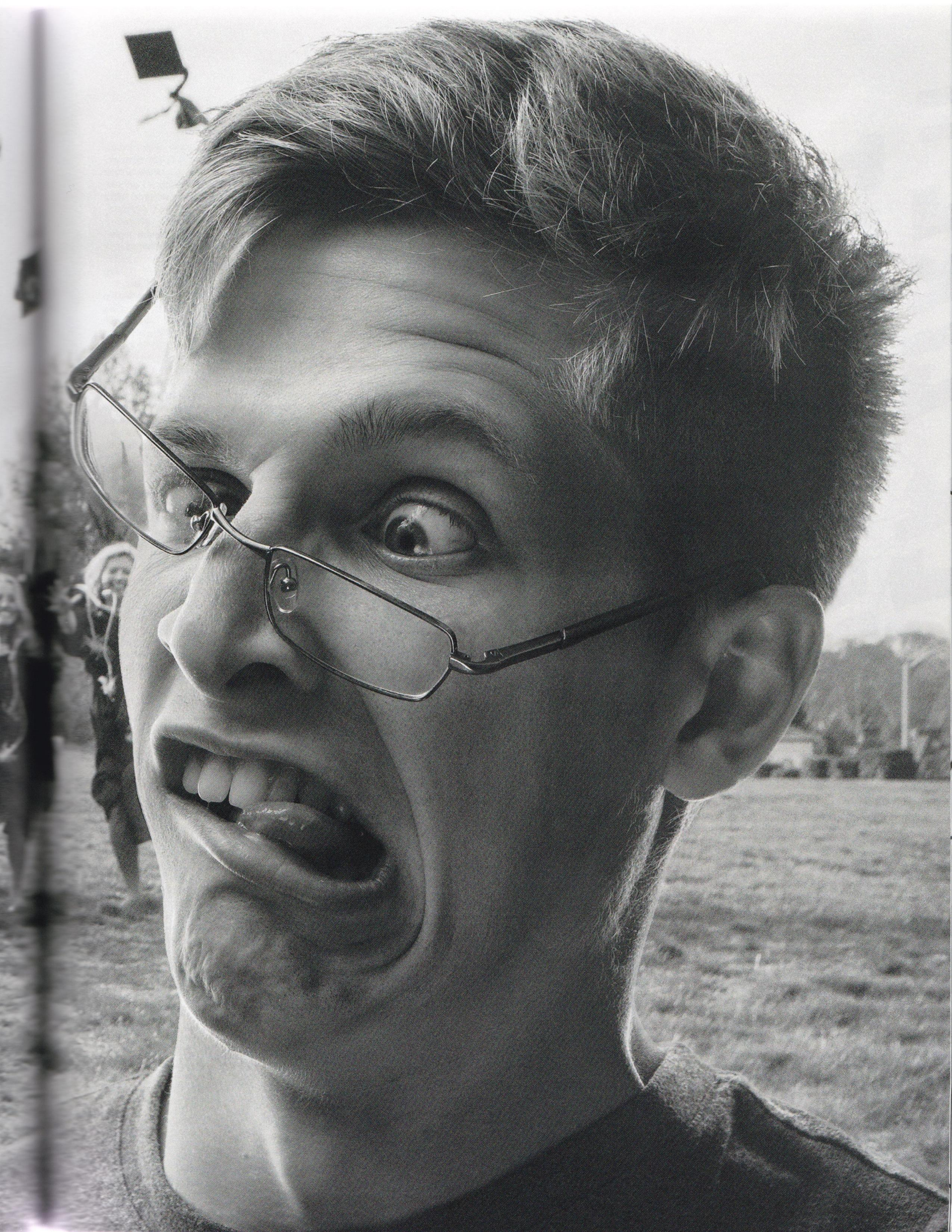
We spent a few days doing this, meeting up, training and filming until eventually, the day came when Spencer would have to fly home.

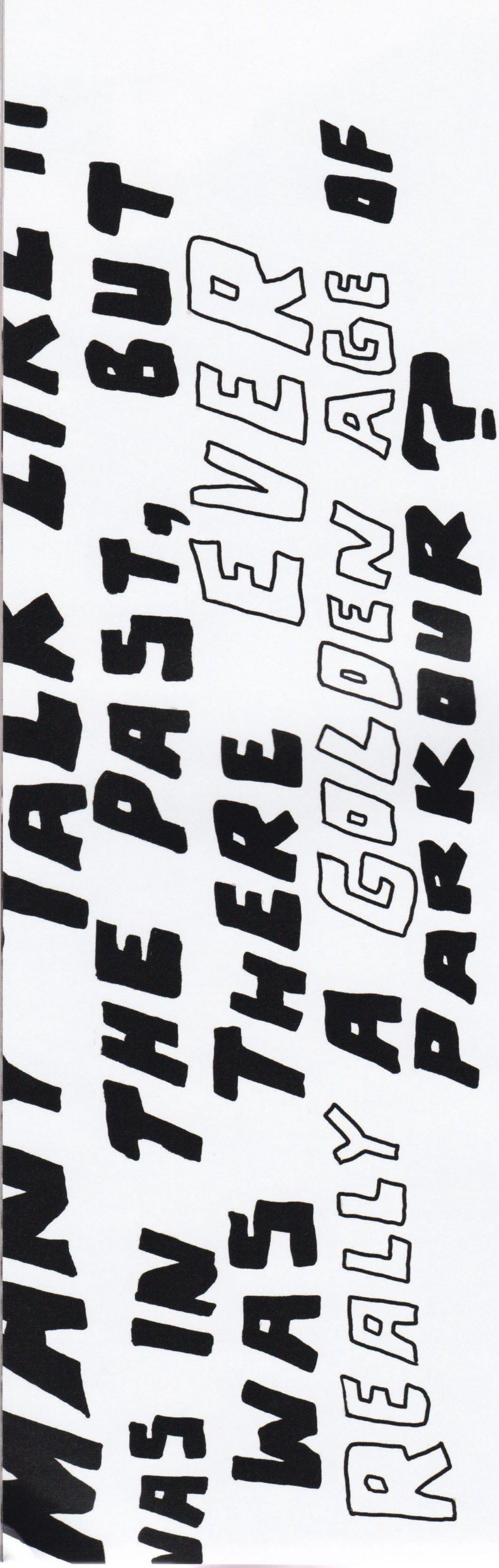
As I reflect on this trip and the different communities I experienced, one thing stood out to me the most. It didn't matter whether it was a tight-knit group of friends, a small growing community, or a world-class one; no matter where you are or who you are, if you have a love for parkour and have a genuine passion for training, there will always be a place and people for you.

Even though this trip had initially been about making a video and experimenting with my creativity, I do not think that it would've had the same impact it did, had I done this with any other sport.

TOGETHER FOR SCHOOL

STORY BY ANDREW OBENREDER





Some time ago, a friend posted a status on Facebook about how they longed for the "golden age" of parkour. For them, parkour today was not the same as it was when they began, and they felt like they were no longer capable of connecting to it and the community the way they once did.

As someone who also began training in the "golden age" of parkour, I do understand the nostalgia for the time - a time when the discipline was closest to its roots, one where I felt most committed and connected to the discipline both physically and mentally, but also to the community and my involvement within it. There were some beautiful experiences, and a lot happened during those times for our collective growth, but was it truly the "golden age" of parkour, and if not, has such a time even existed for us collectively?

I began training back in 2003 during parkour's global infancy and the age of forums. Parkour.net and Urban Freeflow were home to our developing discipline and to those who lived it, but while we had homes, they were dysfunctional ones. We had shared many beautiful things there, but like most dysfunctional families, home life was wrought with argument and disagreement. What is parkour? Is it the same as freerunning? How about l'art du deplacement? Are flips parkour? Should competitions exist within parkour? Is it a catpass or a kong? What about the monkey?

While we have come a long way from there, much of the fighting and confusion that existed then in defining what and who we are continues to exist today alongside many new challenges that have arisen. Fortunately, there's less of the old and more of the new.

The internet has both been the catalyst for parkour's massive growth and its modern evolution. Chris 'Blane' Rowat spoke of the watering down of our discipline in his writing of *Dilution*, and Daniel Ilabaca presented his fears of when "parkour would become entirely physical or only about competition, and the message would be lost" in *Choose Not To Fall* - they weren't wrong. After 15 years of training parkour, a young practitioner debated with me on Instagram about what parkour was, claiming that it was the physical action, even though the physical nature of parkour has existed far before our method of training it. While the original methodology of parkour still exists, this diluted variant has become the mainstream. The growth of parkour happened so rapidly that there wasn't much time or space to transmit its authenticity in a way that could keep up.

Today there exists a definitive split between the original discipline of parkour and the sport of parkour. Even in the beginning, there were a large number of people who supported sport parkour but remained in the shadows due to an overwhelming amount of backlash from those who supported the original discipline, myself included. One of my biggest fears with sport parkour was the potential loss of the values associated with training to be useful and to overcome, as well as the what was built by training those ideologies together as a community. Fast forward to today and the "competitive" side of parkour has retained most of those values. Most people still compete for the sake of personal challenge instead of against one another in pursuit of being "the best," and you see the truth in that during and at the end of every competition as the community celebrates together. Although, now that gymnastics has gotten their hands in the mix, the potential for the further fracturing and dilution of our discipline and sport is greater than ever. Even though some athletes from parkour are involved, it doesn't mean that our gymnastics overlords will do what is best for parkour - they'll do what's best for their pockets.

Just as quickly as our growth occurred, alongside it came an immense evolution of the movement. More acrobatics, tricking, gymnastics, and dance elements were incorporated within the physical realm of our practice, and because of the rapid sharing of ideas that was now possible, people began pushing the boundaries of what we believed to be possible at an alarming rate. For some earlier practitioners, I understand how this can be off-putting; feeling like the old dog who can't learn new tricks or one who can't keep up with the pack. For many others, the booming creativity and constant progress are a beacon of inspiration.

On the brighter side, our discipline and sport have grown. We may not be as tight-knit as a whole globally as we once were, as it is difficult to be as close to as many people, but the internet has given us the opportunity to connect with more like-minded individuals than we could have ever imagined. While the overall community is more fractured, many local communities have grown much larger than in the days of old.

While the roots of parkour remain and continue to grow in some places around the world, the branches have grown far beyond them. What started as a seed has grown into something far more significant than any of us could have imagined. But just as the sunlight directs where a tree will grow, we can act as that light and determine the direction of our growth.

Looking back on it now, nothing truly seemed golden about the era aside from my personal experiences, but aren't those experiences the thing that make any time golden for anyone? For many, it was then, and for others, it is now. The beginning of something is easily the most beautiful - it's filled with excitement that comes from the new and the desire to nourish that new love. I'm sure someone will someday talk about how 2019 was the golden era of parkour, and for them, it certainly will be, but any day can be the start of a new era. The seed can always be planted, but it's also our choice whether we water it or not.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JULIEN BLANC** **@JULIENB.VISUALS**

PROSPERITY AND SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH A PARKOUR ECONOMY

STORY BY **CHRISTIAN WHITWORTH** ILLUSTRATION BY **BRYAN AUSTIN**

Most of the parkour community can agree on two things: We want parkour people to be able to make a living within the sport, should they choose to, and we want the future of the sport to be determined by us, the community - not by outside organizations or corporations. We want prosperity and we want sovereignty. To achieve these ends, we need to take a broader look at the many facets of the parkour economy, both vertically and horizontally. We need to identify the industries that we are reliant on and seek independence. We need to find economic niches in our sport and occupy them before an outside force does.

The issue is that as commercial interest in parkour grows, the culture of the sport will be increasingly influenced by the businesses involved in it. If those businesses aren't run by people who are personally attached to the parkour community, the likelihood that they are exploitative or culturally ignorant increases drastically. While this may not directly affect the way we train, it will affect the next generation. If we want our values, methods, and styles to persist we need to actively pass them on, or the next generation will find others. It should also be considered that we've only gotten to this point through the passion and labors of so many driven and dedicated community members. Those people deserve to reap the benefit of their tireless efforts. The next stage of parkour growth should ensure that.

FORESHADOWING

The community has generally reviled the commercialization of parkour, particularly when members of the community do not run the entity profiting. In 2003, just following the release of the momentous documentary, Jump London, former boxer Paul Corkery, also known as "EZ," saw an opportunity to profit from the burgeoning international parkour community through the creation of an online forum he called Urban Freeflow (UF). Through their website and forums, UF sold training clothes branded with their Glyph logo, which had come to be seen as the symbol representing parkour and freerunning internationally, much to the dismay of more traditional practitioners.

Many people felt that UF wasn't living up to the responsibilities that their status might demand, and the idea of making a profit from parkour was still both outlandish and sinful. Eventually, after years of (what was seen as) misrepresenting the sport by associating it with acrobatics and flips, controversial sponsors, competitions, and parkour lessons for pay, the community turned its back on Urban Freeflow in what effectively amounted to a boycott of the brand.

Today, many of the actions that Urban Freeflow was so vehemently criticized for are commonplace. Parkour gyms the world over aim to make a profit teaching parkour. Parkour competitions are frequent and beloved by many. Athletes actively seek out sponsorship for themselves, their teams, events or their regional leagues, and acrobatics have become a staple in the movement lexicon. For better or worse, Urban Freeflow changed the parkour world dramatically.

These kinds of changes are happening in real-time all around us. Every company that interacts with the parkour economy leaves an impact. Yet, many community members firmly believe that promoting one's own philosophy or training style through business, somehow undermines the nature of individuality in the sport. The reality is, if you don't promote your ideals, methods, and styles, they may one day be replaced-possibly by someone who cares a whole lot less than you do.

DEFINING THE PARKOUR ECONOMY

The parkour economy is defined as the combined wealth and resources of every business that interacts with the community in both directions regularly. This is to say that the company provides a product or service to the community in exchange for money, which is then put back into the community in one way or another. One example of this would be American Parkour. APK provides classes, certifications, and training equipment. The money that they make from these sales goes back into the community in the form of payroll for coaches, workshops, and events like Beast Coast. Many parkour gyms function similarly. Any profit made just goes back into the gym, which supports the community. Even clothing brands like Myrm (RIP), use their profits to support athletes, produce content, and create more apparel for the community.

One might argue that every business does this to some extent; they use their profits to make more products to sell to us. The difference is that most businesses don't have the future of the sport at heart. Trampoline manufacturers don't care how parkour evolves, as long as we keep buying trampolines. A business that actively participates in the parkour economy holds the best interest of the sport in mind, not because they're trying to make lots of money, but often despite it. Trust me; nobody's getting rich off of MÜVMAG any time soon. These people just want to make a living and positively influence the sport.

LOOKING UP

When we talk about vertical integration, we're talking about controlling a product from start to finish-from raw materials to manufacturing to distribution to retail. Though for our purposes, let's instead consider all the industries that existing parkour businesses rely on. This term is also usually used in reference to a single business. However, we're going to assess this task from the perspective of the parkour economy as a whole. We'll define vertical integration as the creation of parkour-people-owned businesses whose function is to take the place of other, non-parkour-people-owned businesses that we currently rely on.

Let's use insurance as an example. Every parkour gym has insurance (I hope), but those insurance companies are not involved in the parkour economy. When that money leaves our pockets, it doesn't come back. That business will likely never invest in a gym or host a parkour event. Those employees probably won't be buying parkour clothes or paying for classes. Parkour people don't own even the USA Parkour insurance policy. According to their website, they merely "extend coverage UNDER OUR OWN INSURANCE POLICY to other gyms and participants." What's more, most insurance agencies don't fully understand how safe our sport can be, and they have no motivation to do so. As long as parkour is a "dangerous action-sport," they'll continue to charge high rates in anticipation of a level of risk that isn't there.

Another industry that our gyms rely on, though to a lesser extent, are the equipment manufacturers. Now, things like crash mats and spring floors don't really need specialization for parkour, but nearly every parkour facility uses spotting blocks, and let's face it, their size and shape is often less than ideal. Many spotting blocks need to be held down so they don't tip when being jumped to or from, and they generally only come in that generic rectangular shape. Some companies make parkour reminiscent foam obstacles. You may have seen the small, velcro down cylinders or the vault box-shaped blocks. However, any adult athlete that has used these will tell you they just don't get the job done. They aren't stable.

Foam spotting blocks designed by parkour people might instead be weighted down in addition to velcroed for stability. They might come in a variety of shapes and sizes or be able to fasten together to create more complex shapes. The days of stacking dozens of panel mats for a high take-off could be over. One may never have to take a turn holding the block down at open gym, again.

If parkour gyms have to spend their money on products and services like these, wouldn't it be better if they knew that money was going out to support people who share their sense of responsibility for the future of parkour? We could be making products more suited to our needs. We could be approaching business with a better understanding than the mainstream market does because we understand ourselves.

NEW VENTURES

Horizontal integration is the process of a company increasing production of goods or services in the same part of the supply chain. This would be like if McDonald's bought up every other restaurant in the U.S. so our only options were home cooking or heart disease. Again, we're going to redefine this term for our purposes. Instead of a single company, we'll use this term to reference the parkour community as a whole. We'll say, horizontal integration is the process of filling out prospective business niches within parkour before non-parkour companies have a chance to sink their teeth into them. We have the gym and apparel market mostly cornered, although you'll still see kids wearing generic "Parkour!" T-shirts that their parents bought off Amazon (Come on, guys.) and there are still lots of ninja and gymnastics gyms running parkour programs, taught by instructors who've never had an outdoor session. That being said, let's try to think about possibilities outside of what we already have.

Parkour is used in film, marketing, and other media all over the world, from music videos to commercials to big-screen action sequences. Parkour modeling and stuntwork are in higher demand than ever before. Companies looking for parkour stunt-workers generally find people by one of three methods. They reach out to a talent agency to find a stunt-worker, who may or may not actually do parkour, (this can misrepresent the sport and may yield less than ideal results) they use someone who has previously done work with them or someone they know, (this keeps the work on bigger projects exclusive to people like Pasha Petkuns, Jesse Laflair, Chase Armitage etc.) or most commonly, through Facebook. A photographer or film-maker may decide on a shooting location and then see who is available in the area. It's likely that you or someone you know has been reached out to like this. I have stumbled into three magazines and a couple of cable news stories this way. The problem with this is that our athletes make little or no money and instead end up working for exposure, which essentially amounts to nothing.

On the flipside, photography, film-making, and editing work could also be done by us. It's often easy to tell when an ordinary camera person shot a parkour sequence, (Looking at you, devinsupertramp) because the movement just isn't quite captured. Renowned athletes Will Sutton and Daniel Ilabaca spent years using their parkour experience for stunt work. They now run Stunt Camera Crew, a UK based videography team whose goal is "to provide an efficient way of filming the 'hard to get' moments on film sets." They do incredible work because they understand the movements they're shooting.

All this work is being done. All this money is changing hands, and very little of it ends up in our pockets. An agency that represents photographers, film-makers, and parkour athletes/ stunt-workers could solve this problem. The next time some clothing brand asks you to be a "brand ambassador" in the Instagram comments section, you could simply say, "Talk to my agent or fuck off." As a community, we collectively need to refuse to work for exposure, and we need to find avenues for our people to get jobs doing what only we can do.

TOP DOWN

The competitive world of parkour and the idea of a governing body are often talked about in tandem because they go hand in hand. Governing bodies affect competition formats, which, like it or not, will influence the way future generations train. Therefore, if we want to guide the future of the sport, we need to control the governing bodies and competitions. Outside influences like the FIG only care about the wellbeing of parkour to the extent that it supports the wellbeing of the FIG.

The limits of their understanding are evident in the lack of decision-making variable routes in their speed courses. The ability to choose a route based on one's own body, confidence, and capability is essential to any parkour speed event. If everyone is made to use the same movements, or if the course is so simple as to suggest the same movements, you're hardly measuring skill. You're measuring fitness. At that point, the competition becomes no different than Ninja Warrior or an OCR. Furthermore, FIG competitions in the Parkour World Cup don't include a skill event. This undermines the quality of absoluteness in our sport. You stuck the jump, or you didn't. You can or you can not. The lack of a skill event also leaves so many parkour techniques by the wayside. There will likely never be a reason for a polecat, toeshoot, or even a clean precision jump in either speed or freestyle events.

Obviously, non-participation is key, but that only slows the growth of FIG control. We need to support our own governing bodies, like USPK and Parkour Earth. We also need to combat on another front. We need to establish more and continue to support our existing competitive leagues, like the West Coast Parkour Championship, Sport Parkour League, and the Midwest Parkour League.

YOUR TURN

For now, the future of parkour remains in our hands, but it might not always be that way. In order to maintain our sovereignty, we need to find ways to replace the non-parkour businesses we rely on, with ones that are run by our people, for our people. We need to seek out new business opportunities and occupy them before someone else does. We need to support the efforts of those trying to hold on to our autonomy through governing bodies and competitive leagues. Above all, you ought not to be afraid to promote your ideals and pass on your movement culture to the next generation. It isn't selfish to affect the world around you. It's selfish not to.

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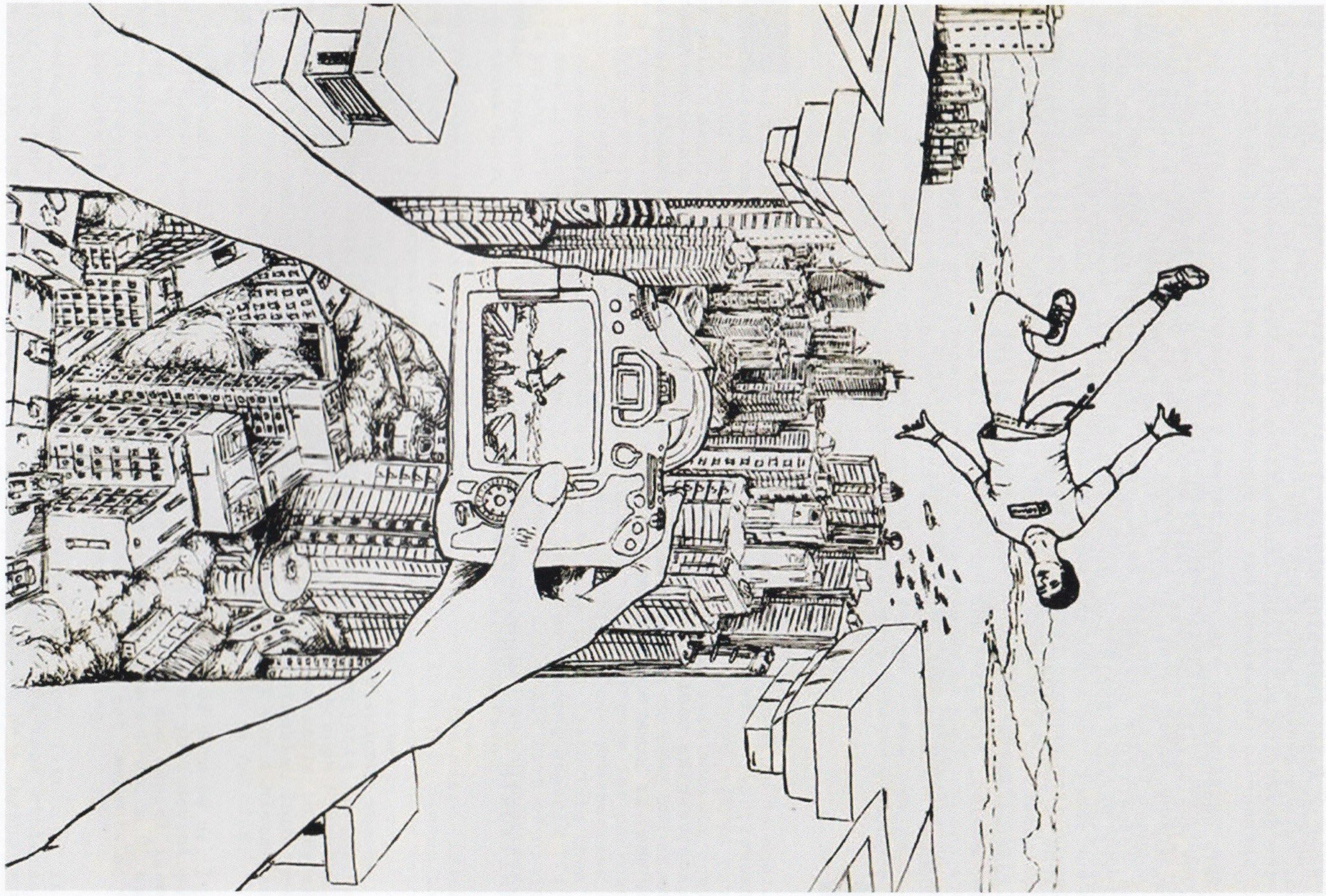
ILLUSTRATION BY **FINN EVANS** **@FINNEVANS.PK**

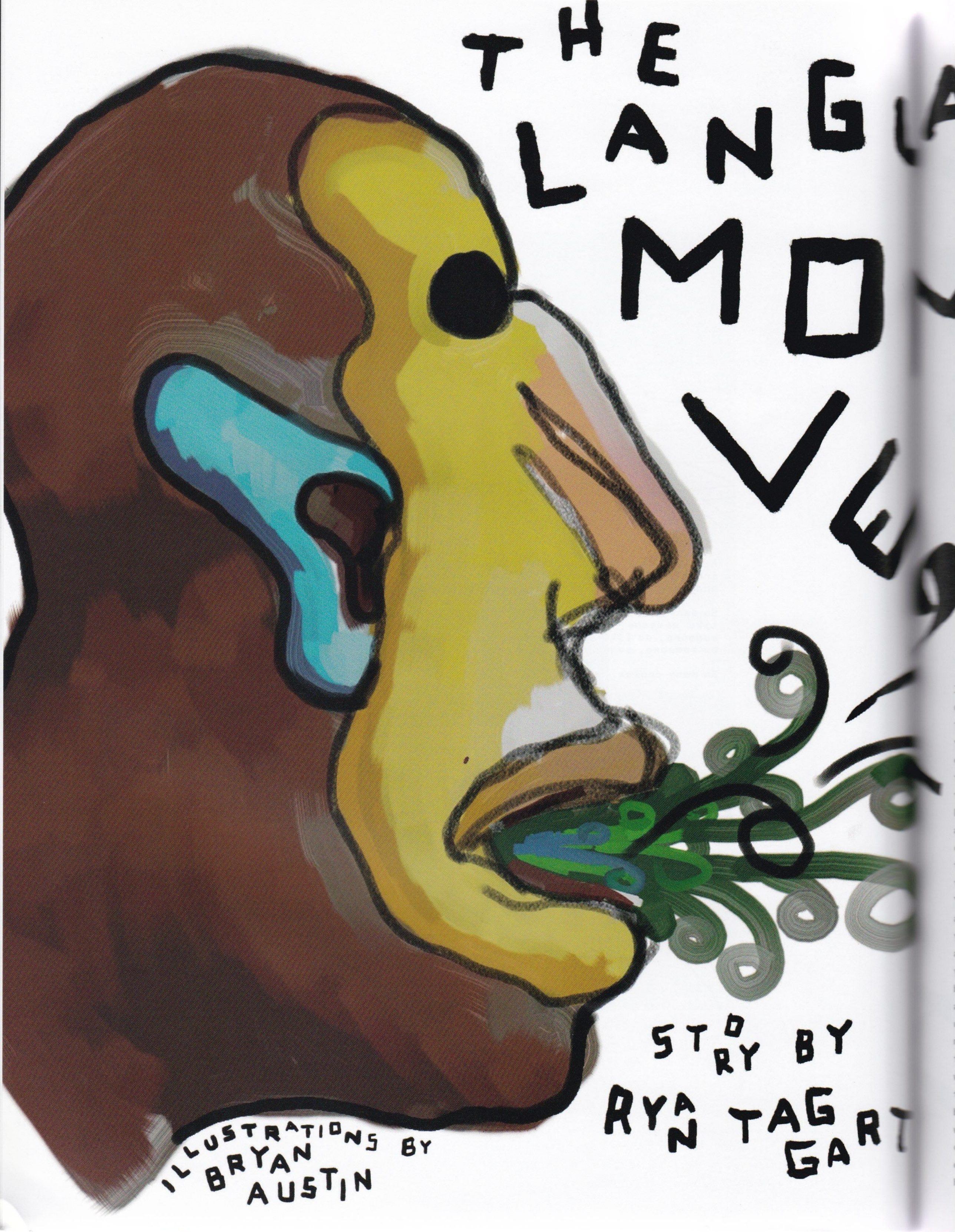


YOU.

At the time of writing this, roughly 7,301,739,999 human beings are inhabiting this planet. That leaves room for so many original people and ideas, yet so much unoriginality exists.

So many people wanting to think like someone, see like someone, hear like someone, move like someone, dress like someone, live like someone, do like someone, feel like someone, breathe like someone, be someone, someone they are not.

So many copies, but you're not.


THE LANG
MO
STORY BY
RYAN TAG GART
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
BRYAN AUSTIN

Imagine you're in an airport. You hear all these different languages buzzing around you, and when you finally hear someone speaking in your native tongue, your ears naturally prick up and pay attention to eavesdrop. If the person speaking only says a word or two like "sorry," "okay," or "thank you," it's hard to tell much about the speaker. You likely don't even know if they're a native speaker or if they only know a few words. However, if they say a full sentence, you can understand their accent, their voice, where they're from, their manner of speaking, their mood, their age, and maybe even a hint of their personality. Your language is a very telling signal of who you are and how you interact with the world, a glimpse into your character, and the bigger picture of who you are and how you got to this moment in time. Now imagine you're training and you see someone do a precision, but later, you see them do a whole line. The same rule applies. For quite some time, it's been widely agreed upon in the community that lines are nicer than single movements, both to watch and to do. I would argue that the reason we feel that way is because we enjoy watching and appreciating how an individual speaks the language of movement, and the finer details of both how their body navigates a spot, and the unique ways in which their mind decides to do so. We enjoy communication and the various forms of it, and how I enjoy movement is not much different as to how I enjoy hearing a good Scottish, Aussie, or Jamaican accent.

The concept of body language is nothing new, and parkour movement is just one dialect; one part of a bigger picture that spans from focused disciplines of movement like parkour or dance, all the way to the slighter details like your posture and facial expression. Just like your native tongue and the accent you speak it with, your movement and training style is ultimately a result of the influences of the environment you've developed in, and the "accents" you were exposed to from early on.

To some extent, the architectural style of your environment has dictated how you move, the types of challenges you learn to interpret from a spot, and even the "accent" you communicate in. Think of the classic Spanish style, German-style, English style as examples. Even lesser-known cultural styles become very clear if you spend enough time there (e.g., Dutch or Belgian styles), which is why we can watch Phosky and Callum Powell do the exact same line, and they'll look stylistically different.

This is one of the things that makes travel with parkour so fascinating. It allows you to visit a place and see how the architecture and cultural mentality of a place has shaped the typical training style there. Also, it will enable you to learn and add new vocabulary to your own language, expand your horizons, and exposing you to more ways to explore your own movement. This is why you might often hear so many people say that after traveling, they find themselves interpreting their hometowns and home-spots differently.

However, with all this in mind, what does this mean for parks and gym culture? How does that affect the language? I can think of at least one European country, possibly two, that has an exponentially growing park culture. Parkour parks have become integrated into their national school system, and all the famous spots of the country are all outdoor and indoor parkour parks, explicitly designed with the intention of parkour (obviously). Additionally, we have specific areas of the USA where the gym culture appears to have dominated the outdoor culture.

What does it mean for a community when their style is defined by the architecture of park/gym designers and not the architectural style of the general environment? In my own opinion, I would say it's a sad trade-off. The locals maybe end up being super well rounded in their skillset, and have excellent facilities to learn and expedite their progression, but at the cost of speaking the language in their own unique accent. I would personally say that park/gym-born styles can potentially be to the language of movement what Esperanto is to verbal language: a simple and efficiently constructed means of communication but created artificially and therefore lacking in organic culture, accent or authenticity. It's the reason why the language never caught on, and people instead chose to continue learning messy and more poorly constructed languages like English instead.

If I say "German-style," you likely know precisely what I'm referring to, even though Endijs and Matthias Mayer move very differently, they both have a unique twist on their style and style that is undeniably German. But can you tell me what a "Danish style" looks like? I can't. Something is missing. The Danish community moves beautifully, but there's something about the movement that seems to lack accent. There doesn't seem to be any sort of niche or defining element to how the Danish interpret a spot. The same goes for specific places in the USA.

So some people might argue, "Who gives a fuck? Why does it matter? If people move well, they move well, and who gives a fuck which 'style' you want to box them into?" And I guess that all just comes down to perspective. I don't think it's an urgent problem, but rather just something worth thinking about and discussing. I personally love variety, culture, and somewhat artistic nature as to how different athletes interpret the world differently; it's one of the reasons I love to travel and explore so much. It just makes me sad when I see a community lose what makes it culturally unique. It's a similar sentiment to the fact I am Irish, but due to colonialism and a long history of cultural discourse, I don't speak the Irish language. It saddens me as it sometimes leaves me feeling like I lack my own culture and heritage.

Ultimately, park/gym influence on people's styles is not the end of the world, and for the foreseeable future, I think the street culture in many places all over the world is strong enough to be unaffected. So I don't think we need to worry about a global loss or standardization of styles any time soon. I think it's just something worth considering for our own training and even more so for coaching and how we introduce newcomers to parkour. And don't get me wrong, I like gyms and parks. They're fun and incredibly useful tools to accelerate progression, and they're unbelievably helpful for places with bad weather and harsh winters. I just think it's a shame when the gym dominates and shapes a person's movement. It's just a matter of ratio. While I'd never stop someone from training however they like, I would personally recommend that the majority of a person's training is outdoors.

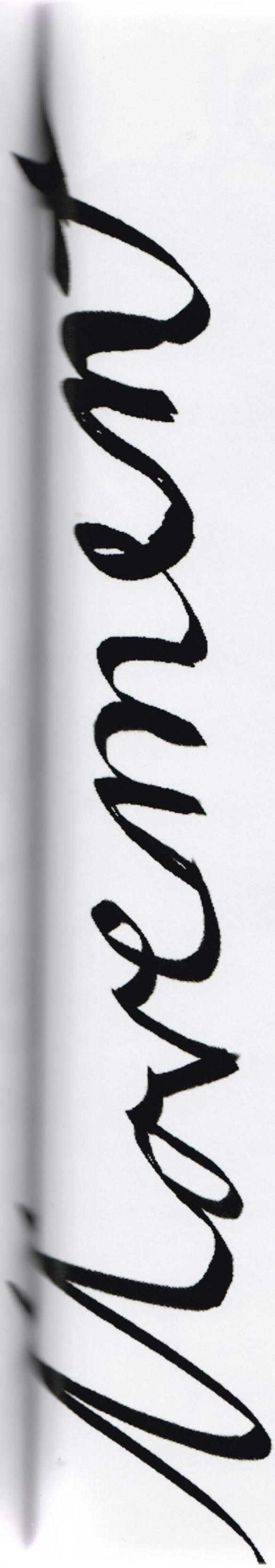
For anyone reading this who is even remotely bilingual, I'm sure you know just how problematic it can be when you try to translate one language to another directly and literally. No two languages go 1 for 1. If you were to translate directly from German to English, then you might ask someone "How much clock is it?", But that will get you nowhere because in English we say, "What time is it?" You have to learn and practice each language in its own respective context; otherwise, you will find yourself limited, incoherent, and at times frustrated.

So why do we often do this to ourselves with movement? For example, the tendency among some parts of the community (I'm looking at you USA!) to give names upon names upon names to every movement they see and each little variation of it that they do. Is it all necessary? For sure, having names for many things is essential to verbally interact with each other in training, but at what point does it start to limit us by boxing our movement into the restrictions of verbal language?

I think for some people, depending on whichever way their brains are wired, they find themselves more creatively restricted when a movement becomes defined within the rigid confines of a name that allows them to think in their verbal language instead. For others, it becomes noticeably more difficult to think outside the box, but only because that box was put there to begin with. To an extent, the names are necessary, but at what point are they limiting?

And as a consequence of over-naming, I think it really shows when someone is thinking in English and then translating it to movement. They'll approach a spot and thinking to themselves, "I'll do a plyo here, then a dive kong here, add flip, add a twist, etc." Compare that to someone who is thinking directly in movement and just lets their body dictate how they navigate the spot whether the movement has a name or not. Do you think Pasha thinks in Russian or in English when he trains? I'd guarantee the answer is neither. Pasha just moves and lets his followers waste their time naming it in the comments.

If languages should be learned and practiced in their own respective contexts, then what makes movement any different? If we can keep a healthy separation between verbal language and movement, only translating when it's vital, then technically, shouldn't that open us up to so much more versatility in our language? To speak confidently, fluently, and coherently like a native speaker? There are already plenty in the community that have clearly had this approach from the start (Pasha, Oleg, and Ilabaca to name a few), and you might have heard them referred to as "natural movers," but I would say that as a species we are all natural movers. They're just fluent speakers.



A story I love that is entirely exemplary of this entire concept is one ancient fable from Northern Ireland community legend and certified Mad-Cunt, Paul Allen ("The Mad King of the North").

Paul is from a small town in the arsehole of nowhere called Magherafelt, which has a small population, and it's a pretty unlikely place to find freerunners. Imagine Paul's surprise back in 2010 when he was walking past a Latvian owned car-wash and saw this random guy that looked kind of familiar busting some mad tricks by the roadside. The guy had just moved to Northern Ireland from Latvia to work at his uncle's car wash, and he barely spoke English, but just enough to say that his name was Pasha.

Despite not being able to verbally communicate much with each other, the two hit it off, communicating through their training. Paul and Pasha spent the next six months training together and pushed each other to do mad shit that Ireland hadn't seen before, like some of Ireland's first kong gainers and double backflips. In the end, Pasha decided that washing cars in a small town in Northern Ireland wasn't for him, and he left. And we all know how things turned out for him.

During the six months that Pasha spent there, he spoke virtually no English, and yet he was able to form friendships with the community entirely through body language. Years later, he came back with Jessie La Flair for the Off The Edge tour, except this time he was fluent in English. It was interesting to see Paul and Pasha catch up like old friends, while at the same time, this was technically their first verbal conversation. It just shows how your training interactions can mean more than what seems like just "jumping on shit together."

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If you're looking for ways to have much more direct conversations with people through movement (pointed out to me by Colten Sweeney, big ups!), then a game of Add-On (aka Add-One, Plus-One) is the perfect way to interact directly with other people's movement. Together you all work to form a paragraph, each adding your own speech, imagination, and vocabulary while learning from each other. It's also in these moments where everyone is doing the same lines together that you really begin to see the difference in everyone's "accents."

The idea that movement is a language is nothing new, and people of all disciplines and fields have been discussing this since long before we were even in our Daddy's ballocks. As the result of lots of long chats over the years with Irish community legend Glenn "Pickles" McMahon, these are just a few conclusions I've arrived to of my own specifically within the context of parkour. It's a concept that could be expanded upon infinitely, and that's precisely what I hope happens.

So what does your body language say about you in your training? Does it make you seem approachable or aggressive? Humble or demanding attention? How do you interact with your environment and others around you? Does it accurately reflect you or your intentions? Where's your accent from?

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DIS JAM

"EVEN THOUGH I'M ALL OVER THE PLACE THESE DAYS, ATLANTA IS MY HOMETOWN AND THE PLACE I STARTED PARKOUR. WE'VE GOT SOME GREAT SPOTS AND A COMMUNITY THAT'S SO CLOSE IT CAN MAKE VISITORS JEALOUS. I STEPPED DOWN YEARS AGO FROM DOING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION, BUT I'M ALWAYS SO IMPRESSED AT JULIAN HAMES AND HIS ABILITY TO BRING EVERYONE TOGETHER FOR THE PURE LOVE OF PARKOUR. IT'S SOMETHING THAT CAN ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH AN AUTHENTIC PASSION FOR THE SPORT AND LOVE FOR ITS PRACTITIONERS. COME TO AN ATLANTA JAM AND I PROMISE YOU WON'T REGRET THE TRIP!"

BRIAN PRINCE **@TALLTRAININGS**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **LEVI PORTER** **COLTEN SWEENEY** **COREY MOTLEY**

"AS I WAS ROLLING UP, I LOOKED THROUGH THE TREES, AND THIS SMALL PARK WAS BROUGHT TO LIFE BY THE PARKOUR COMMUNITY, AND IT JUST LEFT ME WITH SUCH AN AMAZING FEELING: BEING A PART OF THE SOUTH EASTERN COMMUNITY."

COLTEN SWEENEY **@THECOLTENSWEENEY**

"THIS WAS THE FIRST JAM I ATTEND AND ACTUALLY TRAINED AT IN A LONG TIME. I GOT TO SEE SOME FAMILIAR FACES AND MEET SOME NEW DOPE PEEPS. SKILLS COMP WAS SICK. I DEFINITELY HAD WAY MORE FUN TRAINING AND PUSHING WITH MY FRIENDS. PLUS, THE RIDE UP AND BACK WAS DEFINITELY WORTH IT WITH THE BOYS."

JIMMY PERREIRA **@JIMMYPERREIRA**

PARKOUR

"THE BEST PART OF ANY JAM IS THE VIBE OF THE COMMUNITY. WHETHER YOU'RE THROWING DOWN SOME CRAZY SHIT OR SITTING OUT CAUSE OF AN INJURY, YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU CAME. I WAS TOTALLY UNSATISFIED WITH MY RUNS IN THE STYLE COMPETITION TO THE POINT THAT I WANTED TO SIT BY MYSELF AND WALLOW IN MY SELF-PITY. BUT EVERYONE WAS SO UPLIFTING AND ENCOURAGING THAT I COMPLETELY FORGOT ABOUT IT AND WENT BACK TO JAMMING WITH THE BROS LIKE IT WAS NOTHING!"

JIMMY DODSON @JIMMYDOAFLIP

"I THINK THE GREATEST PART OF DIS JAM WAS THAT REGARDLESS OF SKILL LEVEL AND EXPERIENCE, EVERYONE TREATED EACH OTHER WITH A LEVEL OF RESPECT AND EQUALITY THAT I THINK EVERY COMMUNITY SHOULD FOLLOW AFTER. IT DOESN'T MATTER IF ONE PERSON IS BETTER THAN THE OTHER IN THIS SPORT; WE'RE ALL JUST TRAINING TO GET BETTER. AND IT'S COOL TO SEE THE ATLANTA AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER AND DISPLAY THAT."

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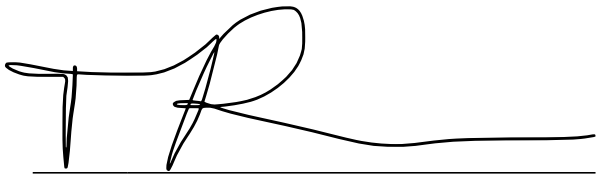

signed by: Trystan Puckhaber
CEO and Board Representative
10/17/2025